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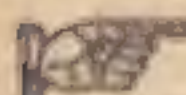
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THE CORSAIR PRINCE

A STORY OF THE WAR WITH TRIPOLI.

BY FREDERICK WHITTAKER,

AUTHOR OF THE FOLLOWING DIME NOVELS:

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THE CORSAIR PRINCE.

CHAPTER I.

THE CORSAIR'S YOUNG CAPTIVE.

AT high noon, on the broad Atlantic, a large ship, with every sail set that could be crowded on her, was slowly drifting along to the westward under the almost imperceptible "catspaws" that at intervals ruffled the glassy surface of the ocean in spots. The day was intensely hot, for the ship was in low latitudes, off the coast of the Great Sahara Desert, and the little breezes that showed themselves at intervals came hot as the blast of a furnace from the wilderness of sand.

But, slow as the ship was going, another vessel was approaching it, as if independent of wind, and to judge from the grave and anxious faces on the quarter-deck of the ship, the stranger was an object of dread to the crew and captain.

The vessel in question was not one-fifth the size of the ship, and the peculiar style of her build made her seem still smaller. Lying very low on the water, with a long, sharp prow that rose several feet above the waist, ending in a figure-head representing a sea-gull in full flight, the stranger was built with a view to great swiftness, which her progress justified. She had three short masts, raking forward, the mizzen being stepped on the extreme taffrail. The fore and mainsail were triangular in shape, of the kind called "lateen," and each yard was over a hundred feet in length, heavy at the butt, and tapering away like a fishing-rod above. The sails, of enormous size, were striped in blue and white, and drooped in folds of a grace that is seen in no other craft except the felucca, the name of this class of vessel. The sail at the stern, known as the "jigger" to English sailors, was quite small, of the same pattern, and extended on a sprit that jutted from the stern. The sides of the felucca were snow white.

Such craft, xebecques, tartanes, speronares, and such like, are common in the Mediterranean and off the coast of Africa. Why then the anxious looks of the men on the ship?

The answer was easy on close inspection of the xebecque. It was seen that on either of her sides a row of immense sweeps was being moved to and fro, and that each sweep of twenty was pulled by four men. Eighty men, for a hundred and fifty ton vessel, is a heavy crew, and looks suspicious. When a long twenty-four pounder grins from a pivot in the midst of such a crew, and every man wears two pistols and a yataghan, things look dangerous. When these men are of all colors and nations, only alike in a common look of fierce recklessness, the climax is reached.

Such men must be either privateers or pirates. In the year 1803 there was no doubt on the subject in the minds of the men on the poop of the French ship *First Consul*. The felucca was a Barbary corsair, coming after them.

On board the *First Consul* were several light guns, but which were not yet fired. The rule of the corsairs was well known. Resistance, if overcome, meant death to all. Submission was only captivity and slavery. The *First Consul* numbered only twenty-three sailors for crew, and the corsair was full of men armed to the teeth.

Presently the wind died away entirely, and the corsair swept on to a position astern of the helpless ship, in which the latter was entirely at her mercy, and less than a quarter of a mile off.

A light brass gun on the prow was fired at the ship, the ball went skipping over the water, and passed close to the Frenchman, while at the same time a large crimson flag went flying up to the long mainyard of the felucca, and disclosed to view a grinning skull and cross-bones on the sanguine field.

The hint was immediately taken, for the French flag rose slowly to the peak of the ship, only to be hauled down a moment later. It was the token of submission. The trader had avoided useless slaughter by surrender.

At the sight of the tricolored ensign, a yell arose from the deck of the corsair. When the flag fell, they became silent, resumed their sweeps, and glided toward the vessel.

A little later, the side-ladder was lowered from the First Consul, and a single person, evidently the leader of the corsairs, ascended the side. He was a man of medium size, graceful figure, Oriental dress blazing with jewels, and he wore a black mask over the upper part of his face.

He spoke to the captain in excellent French.

"Muster your crew and passengers, captain."

The order was obeyed, and the crew paraded, with a silent formality that seemed more like the routine of an ordinary visit from a man-of-war.

The corsair walked to the quarter, and spoke some words in Arabic to his crew, which resulted in a party of about twenty-five climbing the side and ranging themselves by the gangway with drawn pistols.

Then the leader, still wearing his mask, passed down the line of sailors, scanning each narrowly, till he came to the passengers. Here he paused, and his attitude changed. Before, he had looked like a naval officer inspecting a merchant ship. Now he started and looked eagerly at the passengers.

In the midst of the group was a young girl of about seventeen, whose beautiful face, blanched with terror, was turned toward the masked corsair. From her rich dress, she seemed to belong to the upper classes, and the fact of her clinging to a tall and majestic old negress, who seemed to be her nurse, indicated that she was, in all probability, a creole of the French West Indies.

The masked corsair stood looking at her for some minutes, amid a profound silence from all on deck. The suspense was breathless, until he extended a jeweled finger, and beckoned to the young lady.

"Mademoiselle will approach," he said, in a low, musical voice.

As if fascinated by the eyes that gleamed through the holes in the mask, the girl slowly advanced to him.

"Oh, monsieur," she said, in a low, plaintive tone, "have mercy on me."

The corsair answered her not a word. He put out his hand, and grasped her by the wrist, while he scanned her from head to foot, a gaze which the girl endured with shrinking distress. The old negress came to her rescue with sudden and unexpected firmness.

Stalking forward with the port of an ebony queen, she passed her arm around her charge, and struck off the grasp of the masked corsair with an imposing gesture, saying :

“Leave my child alone, rascal !”

The masked corsair for the first time broke from the marble stillness in which he seemed to perform every action. He laughed aloud.

Then he turned to his men, and gave some orders in Arabic. In a twinkling the corsairs were on the crew, pistols in one hand, a pair of handcuffs in the other. With a speed and neatness that showed long practice, they secured their prisoners and marched them down into the dark fore-castle, the officers and male passengers of the First Consul following in silence.

When none were left on deck but the young girl, her nurse, and the corsairs, the masked chief offered his arm to the lady with a bow.

“Mademoiselle will now accompany me to the felucca,” he said.

To the negress he showed a row of glittering white teeth, in a smile of menacing sarcasm, as he told her :

“Old woman, you are a good nurse, and serve your mistress well, but you had best not cross my path. Follow us, if you don’t wish to go with the men.”

The old woman was awed by his tone, and by the fierce faces that were round her. She dropped a courtesy, and followed humbly in the rear, while the masked corsair, with the courtesy of a gentleman in some royal saloon, handed the young lady to the side, and escorted her to the cabin of the felucca.

In the evening, when the sea-breeze set in, the ship and felucca were sailing in company toward the Straits of Gibraltar

CHAPTER II.

THE BALL.

A GROUP of naval officers, in American and English uniforms, were chatting together in low tones, in one of the cloak-rooms of the royal palace at Naples, as they gave the last touches to their toilets, before entering the grand ball-room. All were in the full dress of the day, required by etiquette, and all looked eager for enjoyment, it being their first night ashore after a long cruise.

The time was one when England and America were in very close and friendly relations, and while the war with Tripoli was still dragging its slow length along. The U. S. frigate *Portland*, thirty-eight, had just come into the Bay of Naples, after a cruise, and the English frigate, *Melpomene*, thirty-six, had met her outside of the bay, and anchored alongside. The officers of the two ships fraternized, and all had been invited to the king's ball at the palace.

"Lots of girls, to-night, gentlemen," said the Honorable Augustus Paget, "first luff" of the *Melpomene*, as he straightened his sword-belt, and whisked away a speck of dust from his single epaulette.

"Not much chance for us, when the skipper's around. He's so deucedly good-looking," said a romantic young midddy, as he looked longingly through the door at the brilliant couples promenading the immense hall to the music of the royal band.

"I don't know that," said one of the American officers, a tall youth of remarkably fine presence. "On the quarter-deck it's well to give way to rank. In a ball-room it's every man for himself, youngster."

"Ah! it's all very well for you, Cortlandt," said the English midddy. "You're as rich as the skipper, and your captain's an old married man. But I ain't any thing yet—and oh, Cortlandt," he added in a whisper, "I'd give three years of my time to get a quiet talk with Angiolina."

Lieutenant Cortlandt smiled good-naturedly, as they strolled into the ball-room. Little Tom Trevor was a great favorite of his, for they had taken him for a passenger from Gibraltar, where he had been left behind, sick, to join his ship at Naples, and Tommy had become a favorite in the gun-room mess, as well as in the midshipman's berth during the passage. Tom Trevor was one of those unhappy beings called in England a "younger son," who is kicked about the world without mercy, while his elder brother is perhaps a rich lord. So it was in Tom Trevor's case, his elder brother being Lord Dacre, a baron as far back as 1321, while Tommy was a middy, at every one's beck and call on the quarter-deck.

"Never mind, Tommy," whispered Cortlandt, as they advanced toward the royal dais, to pay their respects. "Keep your weather eye open and watch your time. I'll help you. Who is this Angiolina?"

"The Signorina Angiolina Maria Giuseppina Bianca Toricelli," said Tommy, with a sigh, looking longingly at a young lady about six years his senior, with very big black eyes, who sat near a leathern-visaged old princess covered with diamonds. "She's got an awful long name, but, oh, Julian, she's so beautiful."

Julian Cortlandt smothered a laugh, and pinched the boy's arm in warning fashion, for they were just being presented to the king.

The ball was at its height, and the dancers were whirling in couples to the then newly-introduced waltz. Julian Cortlandt, a little quiet and thoughtful, stood near the door, watching little Tommy Trevor, who had succeeded at last in cutting out Angiolina from under the very guns of the elderly convoy, navally speaking, and now whirled round in perfect happiness, with a partner a head taller than himself.

"Who is that fair-haired girl in white?" asked Paget, presently, coming up to him as he stood there. "The people call her *la bella Americana*, and I suppose you Americans all know each other."

Cortlandt smiled.

"America is a large place, Paget—almost as large as London. However, I happen to know that young lady by

name. She is, in fact, a distant relative of mine, daughter of our ambassador here, Mr. Stuyvesant. I believe we used to call one another Kate and Julian, ages ago, when we were children together."

And Julian sighed a little, as he gazed dreamily at the beautiful figure of that cousin he had not seen for twelve long years. He had heard that Kate was being educated in Europe, and he had looked forward to meeting her, when he heard her father had been appointed ambassador to Naples, with vague sensations of pleasure. The fact was, that they had been little lovers at the ages of six and ten respectively, and Julian had certain romantic memories as he looked at Kate, which prevented him from going forward at once to claim acquaintance.

"I say, Cortlandt," said Paget, suddenly, "don't you know her well enough to give a fellow an introduction? I'll be eternally obliged to you for it."

Thus appealed to, the American roused himself to action, and was about to go forward, when a voice at his ear said :

"Why, Julian, a young fellow like you ought to be darning. Have you spoken to Kate yet? Come along!"

"Thanks, cousin James," said Cortlandt, as he turned to the American minister. "I was just thinking about it."

He introduced Paget, and the party advanced to the reception of her who might be truly styled the belle of the room.

Kate Stuyvesant was indeed a beautiful creature, with the unusual combination of dark brown eyes and the brightest of golden hair, while the delicate bloom on her statuesque face was like the blush on a sea-shell.

Somewhat to his surprise, however, her greeting to him was of the coldest nature, and she turned away from him almost immediately to greet the English lieutenant with marked cordiality, saying :

"Ah, Mr. Paget, cousins are very common nowadays, and don't always behave as cousins should, but Englishmen, I believe, never forget that blood is thicker than water."

Then Julian found himself alone in a group of Italian officers, as his cousin and Paget went off to join the waltzers.

He felt hurt at Kate's coldness, and pondered over her words about "behaving as cousins should," without being able to think of any meaning.

As he stood there his attention was attracted to a slight bustle near the door, as a person of very remarkable appearance entered the room, where he was greeted by every one near as if he was well known, while low bows attested the respect in which he was held.

"Who is that?" asked Cortlandt, hastily, of a Neapolitan officer who stood near him, as the stranger passed through the midst of the waltzers toward the royal dais.

"*Cospetto!* do you not know, signor? That is the *Prince of Delos*."

"The Prince of Delos—who is that?"

"*Per Bacco!* the Prince—not know—why, signor, he is the richest man in Europe—richer than Forlonia, richer than Rothschild! He is the greatest banker in the world, and the handsomest man in Naples!"

CHAPTER III.

AN EVIL EYE.

THERE is something in the possession of immense wealth that renders its owner an object of interest, and Cortlandt found himself looking at the Prince of Delos with some curiosity. If the Neapolitan had exaggerated the prince's wealth, it was certain that he had not erred in calling him the handsomest man in Naples. Cortlandt thought he had seldom seen a finer figure and face.

The Prince of Delos was neither tall nor short. Five feet ten would have about measured his stature. In figure he was quite slender, but his shoulders were very broad and square, while his limbs tapered away to very small hands and feet, with the rounded outlines of an Apollo. This was set off by the rich Greek dress which he wore, literally blazing with diamonds.

That he was a Greek, his classic face showed, the pure outline slightly sharpened from the rounded, fleshy curves of antiquity. What it lost in sensuous beauty, however, it gained in keenness and animation, while Julian thought he had never seen any thing to equal the wonderful power of the great black eyes of the Prince of Delos. They scintillated like live coals as he swept the room with a single glance.

The face of this remarkable man was so pale that he resembled a waxen image more than a living creature, and the pallor was enhanced by the mass of glossy curls that fell over his shoulders in great profusion, black as the raven's wing, and by the long, black mustache that drooped from either side of his short upper lip, below his chin.

"He is a magnificent-looking fellow," said Julian, frankly, as he watched the prince bow to the king, who received him with marked cordiality. "I suppose he is a Greek, from his dress."

"*Cospetto!* who can say? He speaks all languages in Europe, without an accent, and no one knows. His principality is a barren rock in the Egean Sea, where he has built a palace finer than this, and he has houses in every capital in Europe, while his money keeps all the governments in his service, one may say. Not one but owes him millions, and he can command any amount of loans. But who he is, and whence, no one knows. He seems to be a Greek to-day. To-morrow you might swear he was a German, from his language and dress."

"What brings him here, I wonder?"

"Who knows? His majesty may want a new loan; or it may be pleasure. The prince was made Duke of Tarento last week, and that means money in the king's pocket."

Here the waltz ended, and Julian strolled away among the promenaders, strangely interested in this wonderful prince.

He watched him conversing with the king with a manner of perfect repose, not unmingled with haughtiness, as if the prince felt himself superior to royalty. Then, with a bow, the magnificent stranger left the dais, and mingled with the crowd, courted and addressed by every one.

Without being able to account for it, Julian felt a strange interest in the Prince of Delos, which induced him to keep

close to the latter, as near as could be done without the imputation of rudeness. Very soon he found himself by the side of the American Minister, to whom the Greek was talking, with an accent of perfect purity, in English ; and the young officer caught their conversation :

" Yes, your highness ; to-morrow evening she sails, in company with the American frigate. It is a good opportunity for convoy, you know, as far as the straits. Those scoundrels of Algerines and the other Barbary pirates are lying in wait for our merchant vessel, all through the Mediterranean, but they never venture into the Atlantic."

" They are right," said the prince, in his soft, low tones. " The Mediterranean is their home, and they love it. But, does mademoiselle sail alone ?"

" Oh, no. Her aunt, Madame Schaffhausen, is with her."

The prince looked politely inquisitive, but said nothing.

" You see, her mother was the Countess Ida Von Rosenberg, of Munich, whom I married when I was in the legation, prince. Since poor Ida's death, my daughter has been under her aunt's care, and now Madame Schaffhausen wishes to see America, so I take the opportunity of sending Kate with her."

" I should have thought," said the prince, smiling, " that you would have been satisfied to leave her here."

The American minister lowered his tone.

" I don't wish to say any thing uncivil, prince ; but your highness, who has seen America on your travels, must see that this court is no place for a modest American girl. I am only sorry I allowed her to come at all, and I am glad of the sailing of the Martha Washington for the opportunity it gives me of sending her home."

The prince smiled courteously, but Julian, who was watching him very close, detected a slight accent of irony in his tone, as he said :

" You are very prudent, Mr. Stuyvesant. I am sure you will be relieved when you hear of mademoiselle's safe arrival in New York, unhurt by those rascally corsairs and these rascally courtiers. Since the time is so short, you are not afraid to introduce me, I hope."

" Certainly, prince ; by all means."

A moment later, Julian was watching, with jealous scorn-

tiny, the meeting of his cousin Kate and the Prince of Delos. The little conversation he had heard impressed him with two things—that his cousin was to sail in some trading-vessel next evening, under convoy of his own ship, and that the mysterious Prince of Delos was interested in her departure.

The young American could not explain to himself the strange feeling which induced him to watch this Greek stranger so closely, but he realized partly its nature, as he beheld the prince lead off Kate Stuyvesant in triumph to the dance.

Julian felt that he was in love with his beautiful cousin, and jealous of the handsome prince.

He was not the only one, however. All the officers of both ships were over head and ears in love with "*la bella Americana*," and every one felt inclined to pick a quarrel with the Greek, when they saw him lead her off.

It was not till near the end of the ball that Julian took the occasion which he had neglected before, partly from shyness, and asked his cousin to dance. To do so, he was obliged to interrupt a conversation with the Prince of Delos, who favored him with a strange glance. His great dark eyes seemed to flash fire; but almost before it was noticed his face resumed its statuesque repose; and the prince bowed with cold courtesy, as he relinquished his partner to Julian.

Kate Stuyvesant however had seen the look, and as she walked away with Julian, she said in a low tone:

"Cousin Julian, I am almost afraid that man is in league with the Evil One himself."

And she shivered slightly as she spoke.

Julian was surprised. In a moment Kate had changed her whole demeanor toward him, and become the loving girl he remembered years before. The ice was broken, and they plunged into a sea of old memories at once. Before many minutes Julian found himself asking her:

"And why did you treat me so coldly, Kate, when I first came to you this evening?"

Kate pinched his arm sharply.

"First came to me, you may say, sir. You ought to have come long before. A pretty cousin you are, to leave me

whom you had not seen for twelve years, till the ball was half over. I thought you had quite forgotten me."

Julian made his peace by telling the truth, and Kate Stuyvesant blushed deeply when he admitted that he had been afraid to approach.

"For you looked so beautiful, Kate."

Quickly she changed the subject, and asked abruptly:

"How do you like the Prince of Delos?"

"I think he's the handsomest man I ever saw," said Julian, frankly.

"And I think he's in league with the Evil One," said Kate, in a low but vehement tone. "Julian, I'm afraid of that man. His eye makes me tremble."

Julian started, for just at that minute he met the same eye as they turned in their promenade.

The Prince of Delos was watching *him*, now.

CHAPTER IV.

THE PRIZE AT SEA.

THE sun was sloping down toward the western horizon, a few hours after noon, at the very hottest part of the day, but the cool breezes of the Mediterranean mitigated the ardor of the solar ray. The beautiful blue bay of Naples, shut in by rugged hills, at whose feet basked the green vineyards and solemn olive groves, was flecked here and there with little specks of white foam from the wavelets, and dotted with the gayly striped sails of the picturesque little Mediterranean craft that went bowling along toward Capri, at the mouth of the bay.

The white buildings of Naples, with its trim moles and piers, came down to the water's edge, and stretched out a little way into the bay, and the solemn shadow of the black smoke that curled from the crater of Vesuvius served as a reminder of the ever-present danger that lurked behind the beauty of the landscape.

In the bay, a little way from the mole, towered the lofty masts of several men-of-war of various nations; and on board one of these there was a bustle, which indicated that she was about to move from her anchorage.

Several merchant ships of various nationalities were already spreading their canvas, moving slowly out to sea, in a flock; and just as we come on the scene, the American frigate fires a gun.

A moment later the shrill pipe of the boatswain echoes from the waist of the Portland, followed by the hoarse call:

“All hands! all hands, up anchor, and make sail.”

The men came tumbling up the hatchways, and range in lines at the foot of the shrouds, and around the capstan.

Julian Cortlandt, first lieutenant and executive officer, stands on the quarter-deck, trumpet in hand. This making sail from an anchor before the critical eyes on board a dozen frigates of other flags is nervous work to an officer not sure of his crew. But Julian is quite sure of his. The gray-headed captain, who stands on the poop watching his lieutenant, looks quiet and well satisfied. The men have come on deck in good style.

Up goes Julian's trumpet.

“Man the capstan bars! Stand by to go aloft! Way aloft! Lay out! Lively there!”

One after another the orders peal out, and the rigging is black with men flying aloft. The drum and fife strike up “Yankee Doodle,” and the rapid tramp of the men at the capstan tell that the anchor is leaving the bottom.

Up comes the boatswain, touching his cap.

“Hove short, sir.

“Hoist away the anchor!” cries Julian. “Let fall! Sheet home! Hoist away on the topsail balyards! Man the catfalls! Hoist away! Haul in the lee-braces! Meet her with the helm! Well dyce!”

In three minutes and twenty-five seconds by the watch, the Portland is under full top-gallant sails, and stretching swiftly away from her anchorage past the other men-of-war,

who greet the smartness of the evolutions with a general clapping of hands, against all rules.

The first lieutenant walks back to his commander to report.

"Under way, sir."

"And very well under way, too," says the captain, kindly. "I feel proud of the ship and the men, Mr. Cortlandt. If we could have picked a crew we could not have done better. Those sneering Englishmen can't say but what the Portland's up to their crack ships, as far as discipline goes."

Out of the harbor sails the Portland. A moment later and the royals are flying up her tall masts, when the gallant ship goes on her rejoicing way, overhauling the slower traders like a race-horse behind hacks. Only one of the latter seems able to keep the pace, a large ship wearing sky-poles, and carrying the Stars and Stripes. Even in those early days, the American models held their own for swiftness.

Presently the frigate was in the midst of her convoy, and rapidly nearing the American ship, Cortlandt knew her well, the good ship Martha Washington, of New York. On her deck he could see the flutter of a petticoat as they passed, and his heart beat quick as he recognized his fair cousin's form. Kate Stuyvesant and her aunt were on their voyage home, and for a few days the ships would be in company, for the Portland was bound for the African coast to join the squadron off Tripoli.

Just as the fleet and convoy came abreast of Capri, a vessel of peculiar beauty of model came skimming over the waters from behind the shelter of a little island, and passed out of the bay ahead of all of them.

Cortlandt was leaning against a gun, watching his sails with the eye of a seaman, when he heard a small voice close to him:

"Oh, Mr. Cortlandt, there goes the Vohdu. Isn't she a beauty?"

The lieutenant looked down, and perceived little Tom Trevor, who, by special permission of his admiral, and special kindness of Captain B., of the Portland, was again

a passenger ; this time to join the English brig, Peacock, co-operating with the Yankee squadron at Tripoli.

"The Vohdu, Master Tommy?" said Julian. "And who is the Vohdu?"

"Why, don't you know, sir? It's the felucca yacht of that fellow they call the Prince of Delos, the chap that looks as if he'd just been dug out of a cemetery."

Cortlandt started.

"Are you sure, Tommy?"

"Oh, yes, sir. I saw her yesterday evening, and heard the sailors on the quay talk about her."

"And what did they say about her?" asked Julian, as he watched the strange vessel with great interest.

"They said that the devil must have built her, sir, for no human craft ever sailed so swiftly. And then they told all sorts of queer stories about her—how all the chairs in the cabin are set in diamonds, and the very guns of silver. He must be an awfully rich old fellow, that Prince of Delos, Julian."

"I suppose so," said Julian, absently, as he listened to the boy's prattle.

He was watching the Vohdu with great intentness, for it was the first time he had seen her, and she was a sight worthy of the closest attention.

Under a cloud of white canvas, which spread out like the wings of a bird under the favoring breeze, appeared a little hull, gleaming in the sun like a ball of fire. The stern of the Vohdu must be covered with gilding to make such a blaze, for the yacht was leaving them every moment, with a rapidity that seemed marvelous. Presently, as Cortlandt watched her, the Vohdu shifted her helm, trimmed in the sheets, jibed over her mainsail, and swept gracefully round on her heel, showing a side which seemed a mere line of light on the sea, so low was it, and so brilliantly did the gold flash.

"By heavens, the fellow uses gold instead of paint," muttered the lieutenant, as he watched the almost unearthly beauty of the strange felucca.

Presently down she came toward the frigate, sailing within two points of the wind's eye, and shooting forward with immense velocity.

As she came close to the Portland, every eye was on her, above and below, even the grave and reserved captain sharing the general enthusiasm at the appearance of the beautiful stranger.

The Vohdu went skimming past them toward Capri, a perfect marvel of naval beauty. Her hull was indeed covered with burnished gilding, and Tommy had told no lie about the guns. There were four light pieces, and they seemed to be of solid silver, or at least plated therewith. The decks were snowy white, the cloud-like lateen sails of the finest duck. Twenty or thirty men, tall, lithe and active in figure, with the dark, keen profile and black curls of the Greek, were lounging about the deck, in rich Albanian costume.

By the helmsman, and surveying the ship-of-war with apparent interest, stood a gentleman in a rich court dress, only appropriate for a royal reception, but easily recognized as the Prince of Delos.

As the Vohdu skimmed past the frigate, the prince lifted his hat with stately courtesy, and saluted the officers, a compliment that was immediately returned. Then, when it seemed that they were to part, the yacht suddenly wore short round again, and came past the frigate's bows, wing and wing, passing her as if she had been lying at anchor, and skimmed on ahead of the convoy into the open sea.

It was plain that the Vohdu sailed like a witch.

CHAPTER V.

THE CONVOY AND HER GUEST.

On the poop-deck of the Martha Washington, two ladies were seated, watching the glittering wake of the ship in the light of the full moon, and conversing in low tones.

The silver hair of the elder lady, and her matronly dress, together with the fact that she was addressed as "auntie" by Kate Stuyvesant, the other lady, proclaimed her as Madame de Schaffhausen, the sister-in-law of the American Minister

Around the ship, and chiefly astern, were the other vessels of the convoy, while the broad clouds of canvas of the attendant frigate could be seen hovering round the outskirts, like a sheep-dog on guard over the flock.

"It is be-oot-ee-fool!" said madame, admiringly, in reply to a remark of Kate. "Eh, my God, why do they talk of *maladie de mer*? I have no sickness—I do not believe dere is yich a thing."

"Don't be too sure, auntie," said Kate, laughing. "We have had no rough weather yet. But this is very pleasant now."

"Beauteeful! beauteeful! I would be a sailor all de time, *ma chere*, eef it was not for leaving de land. But who t'ink dat it would be so sweet? I was afraid till Monsieur le Prince he tell me dat dey have fine weather dis time of year. Is he not charming, dat prince, *ma cherie*?"

Kate turned her head away.

"I don't like him," she said, coldly.

"Eh, my dear, what you say?" ejaculated madame, amazedly. She was more French than German, despite her name, and had all the French vivacity of speech and gesture. "It is not posseeble! Monsieur le Prince, so rich, so generous, so noble, with a palace in every capital in Europe! And so beauteeful! *Mon dieu*, Katrine, who can help adore dat man?"

"I can, auntie," said Kate, decidedly. "He looks at one in a way to freeze one's blood sometimes, and all his fine speeches can not make me forget that."

"Ah, bah, *ma cherie*, you are too prude. De prince is man of *esprit*, what you say wit, and de young demoiselles—well, it is good. You do right to keep away from de prince. Young girls should be modest."

The old lady chuckled to herself, for free, thoughtless Kate was the very reverse of the prim French damsels, who never raise their eyes from the floor in gentlemen's company.

Kate tossed her head.

"Oh, I don't mean *that*, auntie. You know that. I mean that—"

"Oh, ciel!" cried madame, suddenly, "look at the little bateau. Is it not beautiful? *Regardez donc*."

Kate turned her head impatiently and beheld the Vohdu skimming across the wake under a cloud of white sails. She knew that it was the yacht of the very person they were talking about, and experienced a feeling of terror, slight but undefinable, as she saw the swift felucca skim by with easy grace, and beheld the lithe, panther-like form of the prince in the quarter-deck, within fifty feet of the vessel.

Madame rose immediately and waved her handkerchief in a most gracious greeting, nudging Kate meanwhile to follow her example, as she called out :

“ *Bon voyage, monsieur*—it is happiness to have you so near us.”

Kate never stirred, but the Prince of Delos bowed with great courtesy, and called out, in answer :

“ I am charmed to see you, madame, with mademoiselle. May I be permitted to pay a visit to madame ?”

“ But certainly, monsieur, we shall be charmed.”

Here Kate pulled her aunt's sleeve, whispering :

“ For Heaven's sake, auntie, what do you mean ? We are not on land, to be giving and receiving visits.”

“ *Chut, ma chérie*,” said madame, impatiently, “ which is chaperone, you or I ? Dost thou think I do not recognize a good match for thee ? Be silent, and let the prince come on board.”

Willing or the reverse, Kate knew she could not prevent the visit now, for as soon as the old lady had given the required permission, the Prince of Delos waved his hand, and the Vohdu shifted her helm, and came gliding up alongside the Martha Washington, with a swiftness like the rush of a tiger, and a skill of steering that shaved the ship's side within an inch of her chains.

Kate had felt a certain vague sense of uneasiness during the whole of her aunt's conversation with the prince, and this increased as the Vohdu rushed alongside. Then she smiled to herself as she thought how causeless was fear, for were they not in the midst of a convoy, and was not the Portland within less than a mile of them ?

She looked around her. Yes, there was the convoy, and a long way off she distinguished the lofty pyramid of canvas that marked the frigate.

The next moment she heard a shout forward, and a heavy clang on the bulwarks, followed by a second, close to where she stood, as a great iron, with four grappling-hooks, came flying through the air at the end of a rope, and caught the edge of the rail, when it was hauled taut from the deck of the *Vohdu*.

The watch on deck of the *Martha Washington* had been lounging about, most of them partly asleep in corners, and the mate, hearing the conversation between his passengers and the strange yacht, had supposed all to be right.

The flight of the grappling hooks changed all that in a moment.

As they fell, the mate of the watch uttered a startled shout:

"All hands! All hands on deck to repel pirates!"

Kate turned deadly pale, and sunk back on her seat at those awful words. Her vague fears took form at last.

Hardly was the cry uttered, when over the bulwarks, in grim silence, came pouring a stream of men with naked weapons, who covered the decks in a moment, and overpowered the surprised and panic-stricken crew.

The chief mate, a large and powerful man, was the only one who made any resistance, as he continued to shout in stentorian tones and lay about him with a handspike; but before the alarm had time to spread, Kate saw the brilliant figure of the Prince of Delos rush forward to meet him, pause, throw something which shone in the moonlight, and then the mate threw up his arms, and fell back, silent, on the deck.

Kate and madame, full of terror, clung together as they sat in their seats on the taffrail, expecting momentarily to be invaded by a horde of ruffians; but to their surprise the quarter-deck was not even approached.

The very helmsman, who had kept at his post with the instinct of a sailor, was not molested, as he kept the vessel to her course. Beyond the first shout of the mate, and the muffled rush of bare feet on the deck when the pirates boarded, not a sound had been heard which could reach another vessel.

The *Martha Washington* had been sailing to windward of

all the convoy, the Vohdu had boarded her from the weather side. The consequence was, that the ship was already in full possession of the pirates, and no alarm had been given elsewhere. Before the slight detention could be noticed, the grapnels were cast off, and the golden yacht skimmed away toward the convoy once more.

The Prince of Delos was left on the Martha Washington, with some thirty men, and Kate heard him issuing his brief stern orders in some foreign tongue, when the helpless prisoners were taken into the forecastle, heavily ironed, and the corsairs went below hatches themselves, leaving only a small watch on deck.

Then at last it was that the Prince of Delos came toward the quarter-deck, followed by a single Albanian, and motioned to the helmsman to give up the wheel to his follower. The seaman silently obeyed, and walked quickly forward, where he took a seat among the prisoners, to all appearance unnoticed and uncared for by the corsairs.

The Prince of Delos, in full court costume as we have mentioned, removed his hat with a low, ceremonious reverence to the ladies, and said :

“Madame, I have availed myself, you see, of your kind permission to call, and like my quarters so much that, with your further permission, I shall prolong my visit. To-morrow, in turn, you shall visit me at my palace in Tripoli, and I trust you will like it so well as never to leave it again.”

CHAPTER VI.

MYSTERIOUS MOVEMENTS.

“Eight bells, sir,” said the stiff marine, saluting, as the first officer of the frigate opened his eyes, and sleepily demanded the cause of his awakening.

“Eight bells, sir, and your honor bid me awaken you.”

“Very good, Sam,” said Cortlandt, stretching. “How’s the wind?”

He had been on deck till within an hour of dawn, anxiously watching the convoy, and had only gone to sleep at last from pure exhaustion.

Sam Hodges the marine was Cortlandt's servant, and awakened him at the required hour with true military promptitude.

"How's the wind?" repeated the lieutenant.

"Nor'-nor'-east, sir, and blowing stiff. Ship's under reefed top-gallant sails, sir."

Cortlandt began to dress.

"Convoy well up, Sam?"

"Most of it, sir. Some of them are carrying so much sail that they're ahead of the frigate."

"*Boom!!!*"

A gun was discharged from the forecastle while Sam was speaking, and Cortlandt instinctively turned to look out of the port-hole beside him.

As Sam had said it was blowing a stiff breeze, and the sea was sparkling all over with white foam, cresting the little waves. The frigate was on the starboard tack, nearly free, and Cortlandt's state-room being on the lee side, he could see the convoy staggering away, far to leeward, in two clusters.

One of these was at least two miles ahead of the rest, and headed by the Martha Washington, easily recognized from her long sky-poles. Both she and her consorts were under their royals, a dangerous press of canvas, considering the wind and the proximity of the African coast. The second cluster was made up of the duller sailers of the convoy, who were under safer canvas and close to the frigate.

"Go and see what they fired about Sam," said Cortlandt as he hurried on his clothes.

He began to have a vague feeling of uneasiness, as he went on dressing, when the marine had disappeared. He could not account for the sudden separation of the convoy in those waters, infested as they were with corsairs. Looking out of the port, he could see the low line of the African coast to leeward, broken and jagged with hills and rocks, and began to fear that such a press of canvas might lead the unwary traders to ruin among the dangerous reefs.

He was in the act of putting on his coat, when a second gun was fired from the bows, and almost immediately after Sam entered the room and saluted.

"Well, Sam, what's the matter?"

"Captain's signaling convoy to shorten sail, sir."

Cortlandt looked through the port.

"Why the devil don't they do it, then?"

"Can't say, sir."

"*Boom!!!*"

Another gun. Soon after, loud orders on deck, and a rush of feet, in the midst of which Cortlandt hastily ran up the companion-way, and came out on the quarter-deck to find the rigging black with men, while the foretop-gallant sail was already shaken out of its reefs and the royals were flying up to the mast-heads.

"Ha, Court," said the officer of the deck, as Cortlandt passed him, "the skipper's mad as blazes. He swears there's something wrong with those fellows to leeward."

The first lieutenant found his commander pacing the deck with a very angry face, not unmingled with anxiety, watching the cluster of ships to leeward, not one of which showed any symptoms of obeying the repeated signal-guns from the frigate, for they kept on under all sail.

But very soon the effect of increased canvas on the ship-of-war herself became perceptible. The top-gallant sails swelled out, the royals towered above them, the tall masts bowed over under the pressure, and the frigate began to rush through the water, parting the waves with a speed of eleven knots an hour. Under this heavy canvas she rapidly drove by the rear squadron of the convoy, and began to lessen the distance between herself and the division ahead.

"By Jove, Mr. Cortlandt, I'll teach those rascals that a Yankee frigate can't be outsailed so easily," said the captain, as he shut his glass with a vicious snap. "I can't imagine what they can mean by it, especially that fellow Fish, who has the Martha Washington. Does he think he has the heels of everything in these waters, that he undertakes to sail away from his convoy, hang his impudence?"

"I think, sir," said Cortlandt gravely and thoughtfully,

that there must be something wrong to account for this, some enemy that we don't see."

"Enemy," repeated the captain, angrily; "then why the deuce don't they shorten sail and run under our broadside? The frigate's good to beat off all the gunboats in Tripoli."

Cortlandt scanned the little squadron ahead with great care while his commander was speaking. The frigate was slowly gaining on them, but they evinced no signs of hesitation. On the contrary, to his utter amazement, he perceived that the Martha Washington was *setting her studding-sails*.

The captain noticed it at the same moment, and rapped out an oath, then paused as if some idea had just struck him.

"Mr. Cortlandt," he said, gravely. "Something's wrong here. I don't believe any sane man would set studding-sails in a wind like this, if he wasn't cursedly afraid of something. Pile on the stu'nsails alow and aloft, sir. Set everything that will draw. I'll come up with those fellows, or I'll carry every stick out of the old barky."

Julian bowed, and obeyed his commander's orders. In five minutes afterward the Portland was covered with canvas, and sailing at least sixteen knots an hour, coming up hand over hand with the convoy that acted in so strange a way.

For half an hour longer the chase continued, the land lifting momentarily higher and higher ahead, the frigate gaining on the traders, while the dull sailers in the rear crowded on all sail to keep up with the frigate, without success.

Julian watched his masts jealously. At every gust of wind harder than common these would bend over as if ready to crack. More than once he shouted:

"Stu'nsails downhauls!"

Then the gust would abate momentarily, and he would countermand the order, for the captain seemed determined to hold on at any hazard.

So the chase wore on, till a sudden change occurred.

The towering hills above the harbor of Tripoli were at last plainly in sight, and several sails became visible in the distance, whether belonging to the blockaders or corsairs was uncertain, when a long, low felucca, blazing with gold, and

carrying two enormous lateen sails, stood out of the convoy, lying within two points of the wind's eye, and fired a gun straight at the frigate.

The iron missile came skipping over the waves with aim of singular accuracy, crashed through the port bow, and traversed the deck killing a man in its passage, and burying itself in the mizzen-mast of the frigate.

Julian Cortlandt turned to the captain, and the two officers looked at each other with amazement, incredulity, and indignant disdain.

"Great heavens," exclaimed the commander at last, "I see it all. The infernal scoundrel's a corsair after all, and he's been hooking away our convoy under our very noses all night."

Julian made no answer. His thoughts turned only to the Martha Washington and her passengers, and he groaned inwardly as he reflected that Kate Stuyvesant was in all probability a prisoner to the Barbary pirates.

"Clear away the port broadside," shouted the captain, angrily. "I'll show that rascal he's been too impudent for once."

CHAPTER VII.

THE CORSAIR'S RUSE.

THE reckless boldness evinced by the strange felucca was a matter of astonishment to all on board the frigate, except Julian Cortlandt. The young lieutenant knew the Vohdu, the instant he set eyes on her, and the flash of her gun only confirmed the uneasy suspicions to which he had been a prey, ever since the felucca went out of the harbor with them.

Now that he knew all, he was not surprised. He had seen from the first that the Prince of Delos, whoever he might be, was no common man, as the Vohdu was no common vessel. The shot that had come aboard them was a twenty-four pounder, showing that the felucca carried as heavy metal as any in the frigate, what there was of it, and Cortlandt knew

that the tiny craft could sail three feet to the Portland's two.

All the same, however, the bold challenge from so small a vessel was matter for incredulous surprise and anger among the sailors of the man-of-war, and the men answered the beat of the drum with unusual alacrity, as they flew to their guns. In a few minutes, the whole port broadside was loaded, and the huge frigate luffed up into the wind on an even keel, her sails shivering, when a tempest of twenty-four pound shot went skipping over the waves toward the daring little felucca. The effect was immediate and disastrous. The great white mainsail of the Vohdu came down on deck, the foresail was torn full of holes, and the chips and timber flew in showers from her hull.

"Darn ye, how does that suit ye?" growled the captain of the first waist gun, as he watched the effect of the broadside.

For a moment the felucca lay helpless on the waves.

The next moment, as if by magic, the great white mainsail rose in the air, the Vohdu skimmed off apparently unhurt across the track of the frigate, and a second shot came skipping over the water, tearing through the ship's sides between decks.

"By heavens, that's a bold scamp, and stronghanded at that," said the captain, half admiringly, as he looked at the Vohdu. "He must be crazy, but he shifts sails like a master. Load up again, Cortlandt. I'll blow him out of water, since he insists on it. Keep her full, quartermaster. We're gaining on him."

In fact, the felucca seemed to have been crippled in her sailing by the last broadside, for the frigate sensibly lessened the distance during the next five minutes.

The commander of the Vohdu seemed to recognize this, for he suddenly put his helm hard up, threw over his long yards, wing-and-wing, and went off dead before the wind, leaving the convoy to pursue its way, while he stood for Tripoli.

The frigate, still on the starboard tack, let fly a second broadside, but without the same effect as the first. Instead of a line of gleaming gold, they had to shoot at a little ball of fire, under a cloud of white sails.

Holes appeared in the canvass of the *Vohdu*, but she seemed to be uninjured, for she stood on directly toward Tripoli, the leading squadron of the convoy pursuing a different course, to the west of the town.

Before the larboard guns of the *Portland* could be loaded a third time, it became evident that the felucca was going out of gunshot on her new course, and the captain of the frigate, incensed at the daring of the impudent little corsair, put up his own helm, squared away his yards, and ran down in her wake, before the increasing gale.

"If I don't come up with the fellow, Mr. Cortlandt," he said, "at least I'll drive him ashore, and that's some satisfaction."

Julian looked uneasy.

"May I be permitted a word, sir?"

"Certainly—what is it?"

"Then I would say, sir, had we not better brace up sharp and catch the convoy first? We can out-sail *them*, but I doubt it with yonder pirate. You remember how she walked by us last night."

"Light winds, sir. Why shouldn't she? Now it blows a capful, and we have her. The convoy's all right anyhow."

"Pardon me, captain, but it's my impression that every one of them is a prize to the corsair."

Captain B. started, and then laughed.

"Oh, nonsense, Mr. Cortlandt. How can that be? We heard no guns."

"Captain, I am convinced of it. If not, what makes them carry on as they are doing now? They have been boarded by surprise during the night, and every one has a prize crew on board."

Captain B. looked gravely and hesitatingly at his officer then at the chase, then at the convoy. At last he said:

"By Jove, Cortlandt, I begin to think you're right. At all events, I'll not endanger the recapture by running in too close. I think we're almost within gunshot of the black-guard. Give him a good hot broadside, and we'll go after the prizes again."

Julian brightened up. He had been racked with anxiety on Kate's account, and longed to convince himself of her safe

ty. Strangely enough, he never thought of the possibility of her being removed from the ship in which she had been a passenger.

He went forward to see under what conditions the chase now existed, and found the Vohdu within long gunshot, dead ahead, while the captured convoy was broad off, on the star-board beam, close hauled and sailing westwardly, but also within gunshot.

Within a quarter of a mile of the frigate frowned the black rocks at the entrance of the bay of Tripoli, at the extreme end of which he could see the hill and forts and town of Tripoli itself, while the barren coast stretched away, dead in the track of the escaping convoy, showing that they were embayed, and probably making for some little harbor.

The lieutenant had hardly taken all this in at a glance, when the Vohdu braced sharp up, and ran off to the westward, firing another of her exasperating guns, with her usual accuracy.

The shot crashed through the bow ports of the frigate, knocking a gun-carriage all to pieces, sending the splinters flying over the deck, killing four men out of the gun-crew, and tearing a great piece out of the mainmast in its passage.

The confusion attending the blow had not ceased, when from the look-out at the masthead came the startling shout :

"Breakers ahead ! Breakers broad alee !"

In a moment Julian was up on the knightheads, scanning the water. Sure enough, a white line of breakers was there, less than a couple of cable's lengths ahead !

"Port your helm !" yelled the officer, excitedly. "Haul in the larboard braces ! Haul in lively !"

Obedient to his voice, like a living creature, the great ship swept round her head in a majestic curve to the westward, her sails shivering, while the sail-trimmers worked like madmen at the braces to fill the canvas again.

Even in her perilous position, the men at the port-guns could not restrain their fury at the trick the felucca had played them. One after another, as they bore, every gun of that broadside was discharged at the Vohdu, and with such accu-

racy that only the long range saved her from ruin. As it was, the trim little felucca, that a moment before had so saucily defied them, riddled through and through with shot, lost both her huge lateen sails, and lay on the water a seeming wreck, not three-quarters of a mile off from the frigate.

But the Portland was soon in even worse plight.

Foaming along as she had been under all sail, her speed had been very great, and the sudden change of direction was accompanied with great leeway. Before she had fully gathered way on the starboard tack, the white line of the breakers already was close under her broadside, and the peril became imminent that she would drive on the rocks.

A moment later she scraped past, and green water showed ahead. Julian shouted for two men in the chains with leads. Then he ran back to the quarter-deck, through a ship which had become silent as the grave.

On went the frigate, skimming past the breakers, and slowly clawing off, eating up into the wind.

"What water have we?" calls the captain.

"By the mark, *eight*," sings out one man.

"By the deep, *seven*," sings the other, next the reef.

"By the deep, *six*," presently shouts number one.

"Hard down with the helm!" bellows the captain. "Hands 'bout ship! Tacks and sheets! Haul of—"

BUMP! *Bump!* C-r-r-r-r-r-r-r-ack! *Crash!*

The frigate is hard aground, grinding her keel over a round reef of rocks, hidden under the smooth, green waters.

The corsair had led them into a pretty trap indeed. Such a prize was worth all the peril to the Vohdu.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE GILDED PRISON.

ON the summit of a hill overlooking the town of Tripoli, frowned a huge, rambling old castle, built in the times of the Romans, and enlarged and altered by many subsequent generations of the Saracen conquerors who succeeded to the dominion of Africa.

The old castle was surrounded by grounds full of olive-groves and vineyards, a little stream had been turned into several artificial cascades, and flocks of picturesque Moorish goats roamed here and there in the vicinity. On the other side of the hill extended a large pasturage, full of cattle and camels, and the black tents of an encampment of Arabs dotted the plain, near a grove of palm-trees.

The gate of the old castle, flanked with crumbling towers, was jealously shut, on the morning on which we come upon the scene, about two weeks after the wreck of the *Portland*, and negro soldiers were lounging on a bench in front of the guard-room, basking in the sun.

Then there appeared, on the steep path climbing the hill from the town, a small cavalcade of horsemen, muffled in long, Moorish cloaks, and surrounding a stately camel, that paced solemnly along, under the burden of a sort of litter shaded with curtains, that seemed to contain something very jealously guarded.

At the head of the cavalcade rode a single horseman, in the rich costume of a Moorish dignitary, flashing back the sun from the gold embroidery wherewith his velvet garments were loaded, and showing the pallid face and burning eyes of the Prince of Delos.

As the head of the little procession made its appearance by the castle gate, the negro porters suddenly awakened from their lazy apathy, and a great bustle ensued. The gate clanged open, and the Prince of Delos rode into the castle court. The horsemen in the procession were about to follow, when

the negroes within raised a shrill cry of warning, and a dozen cimeters gleamed in the air. The guards rushed to the gate, and ranged themselves in a line before it, brandishing their weapons and jabbering some inarticulate sounds, evidently determined to allow no one else within the court but their master.

The horsemen in the procession, on the other hand swarthy, bearded ruffians of every hue and nation, began to growl out guttural curses and handle their weapons, as if determined to force an entrance, while their eyes flashed angry contempt on the black mutes, who opened their *tongues* mouths in the gabbling efforts of the dumb to express their anger.

For a moment it seemed as if a conflict were inevitable between the followers of the mysterious Prince of Delos, but the chief himself quelled it in a manner characteristic of the man.

He did not deign to turn his head, although the sounds of altercation behind him were growing louder momentarily. He rode across the court to the inner door, where a mute negro lad was waiting to hold his stirrup, and slowly dismounted from his horse on the marble steps.

Then he deliberately drew from his belt one of the four long Turkish pistols with which it was loaded, and leveled it at the crowd in the gate, just as the first of the Moorish horsemen had raised his cimeter to cut down one of the mutes.

Without a word of warning or command the corsair chief fired, and brought down the Moor with a broken sword-arm. Then he threw the pistol to the boy, drew a second, and fired a second shot into the crowd of horsemen with the same cold-blooded indifference, tumbling a second man out of his saddle, dead.

The first shot produced a pause in the conflict, the second a dead silence.

Then the corsair chief spoke for the first time, in low, stern tones, that were distinctly audible amid the hush.

"Are you all mad that you dare to follow me *here*? Let that camel pass in, take up the dead body and return to camp, if you are not tired of your lives."

Obedience was prompt and instantaneous. One of the horsemen led forward the camel and resigned its halter to one of the black mutes; the gate clanged to, and the cavalcade of horsemen moved slowly and sullenly off in the direction of the Arab encampment.

Meanwhile the camel, with its mysterious burden, was led across the marble paved court, past the springing fountain bordered with aloes, to the foot of the steps. The mute made a guttural grunt, and touched the creature in the chest, where it immediately lowered itself on its knees.

The Prince of Delos advanced to the side of the litter, and spoke in perfect English, with an expression of great courtesy:

"Will the ladies honor me by descending and entering my humble mansion? It is entirely at their disposal."

"Oh, *mon Dieu*, Monsieur le Prince, I am nearlee dead with the steps of this jolting animal. I am transport with joy to escape at last."

Madame de Schaffhausen's round, florid face made its appearance at the same moment from between the curtains of the litter, and the old lady descended to the earth, followed almost immediately by the light, graceful form of Kate Stuyvesant.

The difference in demeanor between the two ladies was marked.

Madame seemed as happy and jolly as ever, and accepted the hand of the chief with perfect unconcern, as if they were still at a ball in the midst of civilization. Kate Stuyvesant, on the other hand, was very pale, and her reddened eyelids indicated that she had been lately weeping, but her demeanor was as cold and haughty as if she too was in a palace and mistress of all she surveyed.

"Will not mademoiselle accept my arm?" asked the prince, with the same evil smile which he so often wore.

"An American girl needs no help from a pirate like you," said Kate, haughtily. "One who wars on women and children wastes his time in trying to conciliate his victims."

"Oh, mademoiselle, spare me the word," said the corsair prince, blandly. "Guests, if you will, not victims. You

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mistake me entirely, as you will soon acknowledge. You will not accept my arm. Be pleased, then, to follow."

Madame had already slipped her arm within that of the prince, and they passed through the horse-shoe arch of the Saracenic doorway, to find themselves in a long vestibule, bordered with rows of columns, and leading into a succession of lofty halls. Kate Stuyvesant cast a hurried glance around the court, but the closed gate and frowning walls, the grinning, beardless faces of the mutes on guard, the knowledge of the country in which she was, all seemed to preclude the remotest hope of escape, and she turned sadly and dejectedly away, to follow the steps of her captor.

As soon as she too had passed within the portal, the door clanged to, and she heard the grating of bolts behind her. Then she knew that she was indeed a prisoner.

The prison was, however, a gilded one, that was one consolation.

As Kate Stuyvesant advanced into the corsair's hold, she thought she had never seen any thing more beautiful in her life. It reminded her of the most extravagant stories in the Arabian Nights. Without, the crumbling old castle had given little promise of beauty, beyond dead walls, and a few windows, more like loopholes, high up in the towers. Once within the central part of the building the scene was wonderfully changed.

The trio wandered slowly on through a maze of halls and cool vestibules paved with the bright mosaic of colored tiles that looks so delicious in the sultry noon of Africa. The walls glowed with all the hues of the rainbow, relieved with gilding, in graceful arabesques mingled with scrolls of foliage among whose branches perched bright-hued birds, painted in a style seldom seen in Mahometan habitations. The walls were bordered in every room with broad divans covered with bright Persian carpets or embroidered cushions, and every room had its little springing fountain tinkling musically in its alabaster basin, and blending in a pleasant murmuring monotone that was inexpressibly luxurious.

The day without had been intensely hot, and the contrast of these cool halls was very refreshing. The only peculiar feature in the place was that it seemed entirely deserted, and

that the windows were every one at least twelve feet from the ground.

At last the prince paused before a closed door, and said :

“Ladies, before you lies the entrance to the harem. It will be your home for some days. Enter without fear, for I leave you. Woman is supreme within here.”

He bowed and vanished

CHAPTER IX.

THE MOSLEM MINISTER.

IN the midst of the town of Tripoli frowned another old castle, very different from the corsair's stronghold. Without and within, it was alike gloomy and cheerless, save in the grand central hall, where a handsome dais was erected at one end for the bashaw and his court, for the castle was the bashaw's judgment-seat and prison in one, and not far removed from his proper residence.

Within this grand hall of audience, on the evening of the same day on which the Corsair Prince conducted his female captives to the harem, a throng of sullen prisoners from the wrecked frigate was ushered into the presence of the bashaw, surrounded by a line of Moslem guards, armed to the teeth.

The bashaw himself, a swarthy old Moor with a white beard, was squatted on the *musnud*, or seat of justice, attended by a numerous suite of high dignitaries, and he rubbed his hands furtively with a smile of triumph as the captain of the guards escorted forward the captive officers of the Portland while the sailors and marines were kept in the body of the hall.

It was too true. The unfortunate frigate, that had sailed out of Naples so proudly, trapped among the shoals, helpless and aground, had been compelled at last to haul down her flag to the swarms of gunboats that came hurrying out of Tripoli at sight of the mishap, and officers and crew of the ship had been captured and brought into port.

The plight in which they now appeared was sufficiently poor. Men and officers alike had been treated like the captives of brigands rather than prisoners of war, and marched up to the musnud only half clothed. Captain B. had been robbed of his epaulettes, watch, sword, and every thing else that was valuable, Julian Cortlandt had not kept his coat, and poor little Tommy Trevor had been reduced to a pair of white trowsers, without even a shirt, hat, or shoes.

Nevertheless, it was with a bearing as proud as if on the deck of their own vessel, that the officers ascended the musnud and faced the old bashaw.

In front of the old dignitary and his suite stood a little withered old man with sharp black eyes, only wearing a thin, scraggy mustache, instead of the full beard that adorned the other members of the court.

This old man, who was muffled in a number of bright embroidered robes, in spite of the heat of the weather, advanced to the American officers and addressed them in very good French, saying :

"Messieurs, in the name of his Highness the Bashaw, I am to bid you welcome, and to request you to be seated. I am Sidi Mohammed d'Ghies, Minister of Foreign Affairs to his Highness. Be seated."

"Thank you, monsieur," replied Captain B., in the same tongue. "I can assure you that his Highness' welcome is very different from that which we experienced from your soldiers."

Sidi Mohammed grinned, an operation which started a perfect maze of wrinkles in his yellow old face, then turned to the bashaw, and seemed to give him the purport of the speech in Arabic.

The old man remained curled up on the musnud, while the officers of the Portland were taking their seats around, and then taking the long pipe from his mouth spoke a few words.

"His Highness says that he is sorry for your sakes, gentlemen, and glad for his own. The fortune of war has been against him so far in the war, and you shall have no cause to complain of your treatment while our prisoners."

"Did the old fellow say all that?" whispered Tommy Trevor to Julian with a dubious air. "I only heard him say a few words."

"Interpreters take a good many liberties, Tommy," whispered back the lieutenant.

The the bashaw, through Sidi Mohammed, began to question Captain B. very closely about the force of the American squadron in the Mediterranean, the number of men and guns, and a number of similar questions, to all of which the American commander returned exaggerated replies, so much so that Tommy Trevor whispered:

"I say, Julian, by Jove, you know the skipper's telling whoppers."

"The skipper knows his business, I guess," said Julian, quietly. "If he told the truth, the old scoundrel might despise and ill-treat us."

After nearly an hour spent in this cross-examination, Sidi Mohammed announced that the audience was over, the Christians being put in his charge, and conducted the officers into the next room, where to their surprise they found a handsome banquet provided for them, to which they were able to do full justice, being half-famished.

The men were distributed throughout the castle in the various halls, the bashaw left for his own residence, and the crew of the Portland settled down to the conviction that they were prisoners, till such time as the rest of the squadron should either rescue or ransom them. The officers were quartered in the abandoned American consulate.

"Well, Julian," said Tommy Trevor, suddenly.

"Well?" said the other, listlessly. He was sitting on a mat, in the bare stone room that had been assigned to them, gloomily meditating over his own fate and that of Kate.

Tommy had been standing by the narrow barred window, which commanded a view to the north, over the blue Mediterranean, and the poor lad shivered as he stood, for he was still half-naked, and the north-breeze blew cold and chilly in at the window.

There was a bright moon outside, that night, and Tommy was looking out over the flat roofs of the Moorish houses toward the sea.

"I say, Julian," repeated the middy, coming back to Julian's side; "I have an idea. Why shouldn't we cut and run?"

"Because it's no use, youngster," said Julian, gloomily. "If we did get out, how should we get away? We don't know a word of the language, and we should be stopped at the next corner."

"Well," said Tommy, very mysteriously, "suppose we had a friend who would help us? What do you say to that?"

Julian started and looked at the boy with more attention.

Tommy nodded several times with an air of mystery, and then whispered:

"Old Sidi Mohammed's our friend, and I'll bet all my allowance on it. If we want to escape, he'll let us do it."

"What makes you think so?" asked Julian.

Tommy was about to answer, when a light gleamed under the door of the room, and footsteps were heard approaching.

"Hush!" he whispered, "I'll bet the old fellow's coming now. I saw it in his eye when he put us all in here."

The rusty bolts grated as he spoke, and the door opened.

Sure enough, the withered yellow face and twinkling black eyes of Sidi Mohammed d'Ghies, Minister of Foreign Affairs, was seen in the light of a lamp carried by a huge, powerful negro slave, armed with a heavy cimeter. This negro was followed by a second, bearing a bundle of clothes, which he set on the ground, retiring without a word.

Then Sidi Mohammed spoke to the lamp-bearer in Arabic. The slave, who, like all about there, seemed to be a mute, bowed silently, set down the lamp and left the room. Sidi Mohammed turned to the two prisoners at last, opened his mouth in a quizzical grin, and shrugging his shoulders, exclaimed, in broken English:

"Aha, you vas surprise. *Ma foi*, you have no need. I too, am a Frenchman."

"A Frenchman?" echoed Julian, astonished.

"And vy not? *Ma foi*, dere is Frenchman and Espanol and Engleesh in dis countree, many, many. Dey be slave, prisonier, and sometime dey become Moslem. Den dey free, and you call dem renegado; but dey no care. I be von of dem, and I like you, leedle poy, and I come to help you—*comprends tu?*"

And Sidi Mohammed patted the naked shoulder of little Tom Trevor as he spoke.

"Come, den, you must be cold. Attend: I have clothes in ze bundle, and I help you get out for dat—you see—and your camarade. But you must keep ze secret, for if de pasha he find it out, my head will not be wort' fifteen centimes."

As he spoke, he opened the bundle of clothes, and discovered a magnificently embroidered dress.

CHAPTER X.

TOMMY'S STRATEGY.

KATE STUYVESANT reclined on a broad, luxuriant divan, covered with soft velvet cushions, beneath the glowing canopy of a lofty dome, vaulted with intricate patterns of mosaic, of all the colors of the rainbow set off with gilding. The dome was the covering of a vast central saloon in the heart of the corsair's stronghold, which was decked with the most charming mingling of Oriental and European tastes imaginable.

The floor was covered with a brightly-glowing tessellated pavement, strewn here and there with soft rugs, lion-skins and leopard-skins. In the midst of the saloon a silvery-toned fountain plashed and bubbled, surrounded with a perfect bower of verdure and perfume. &c. far, all was Oriental.

But far from being Oriental were the pictures on the walls and the statues that stood around the room, each a perfect gem of its kind, but all breathing a soft, voluptuous air far removed from the chaste beauty of *Iuena*. Venus and Adonis, Apollo and Daphne, Cupid and a maiden—all such subjects were frequent on the walls and in marble, but the severer beauties of sculpture were absent.

On the same couch with Kate, and conversing earnestly with her, was a young girl whom we have not seen since the commencement of our tale. The same young French lady whom the Corsair Prince carried away from the French ship, Premier Consul, was now near Kate Stuyvesant, her companion in misfortune.

Strange to say, neither of these ladies had changed ha-

tune in the slightest. Surrounded by gorgeous odalisques, glittering with gold, both Kate and the stranger retained their European dresses.

It was on this very point that they were conversing, while an old negress, the nurse of the little Creole girl, sat a little way off plaiting straw with swift mechanical fingers, while she watched with dragon's eye the welfare of her young charge.

"Ah, Katherine, it is not such a bad place, after all, as you would think. The harem has one good point. It is sacred from the intrusion of all but one man, and he is on his best behavior when he comes in."

"Is he?" said Kate, doubtfully.

"Oh, yes," said the Creole, with a smile. "If not, there are so many of us that we speedily bring him to terms. When first I came here, the prince wanted me to change my dress, and take the costume of the country, but I had only to refuse point-blank, and presto! there was a riot in the harem. The women gathered to my assistance, and my lord was driven out and has never dared since to molest me."

"Who is he, then, this terrible wretch?" asked Kate, musingly.

"*Ma chérie*, no one knows; but I think he is one of your countrymen."

"My countrymen, Aimee?" said Kate, starting. "What do you mean?"

"I mean," replied she who was called Aimee, "that he talks English with a pronounced nasal accent, such as I have heard in Martinique from the American sailors of Boston."

"Martinique! Are you of Martinique?"

"Certainly. You have heard that the Empress of the French was once Mademoiselle Josephine de la Pagerie, of Martinique? *Eh bien*, I was her playmate. We were both children near there, and Aimee Dubuc de Rivery is not even a countess yet, only a poor slave in a harem, guarding her honor with her life."

The girl sighed deeply, and Kate could not console her. She felt too deeply the need of comfort herself. These two girls, of all the corsair's captives, were alone educated and re-

lined, and the notion of a harem goaded them both to equal torture.

They had fraternized, since Kate's first entrance into the harem with madame, who seemed to be perfectly contented with her lot, and was always making mysterious telegraphic signals to Kate whenever the latter seemed disposed to bewail her own. In fact it was certain that the Prince of Delos, in some manner or another, had managed to obtain a complete ascendancy over madame.

While the two girls were talking sadly together, on a sudden entered the ugly old sinner, known as Kislär Aga, or chief eunuch of the harem. He came strutting, or rather rolling in, for he was as fat as a prize ox, and his dress blazed with jewels. He was followed by several mutes of his own degraded kind, and was the only person in the harem except the women whose tongue had not been cut out by the barbarous policy of Oriental jealousy.

He came proudly in now, and announced, with an air of tremendous dignity, in a high, squeaky voice :

"The most worshipful *khanum* (lady) Sitt Maryam, chief wife of Sidi Mohammed d'Ghies, first vizier to his highness the bashaw, has done our house the honor to visit it, to-day. She wishes to behold the faces of the latest slaves of the Lord of the Sea."

"Tell the *khanum* she is very welcome," said Aimee de Rivery, before Kate had time to speak, as indeed she did not understand a word of the Kislär Aga's address.

Then, as the strutting black disappeared, she turned to Kate.

"You do not know that we in the harems receive and return visits. It is quite a common thing. This wife of Sidi Mohammed is an Englishwoman, whom he bought in the slave market of our master, a year ago."

"Our master?" echoed Kate. "Do you mean to say, then, that the Prince of Delos sells his slaves?"

"Yes, and all his plunder that he does not need. He only keeps here the very pick and choice of his captures, so you and I may be flattered, *ma chérie*. We shall probably be dispatched in a vessel to Constantinople, to be sold to the Sultan."

"Ugh!" said Kate, with a shudder. "That would be even worse."

"I don't know that," said Aimee, with a dreamy smile. "I have heard stories of this Sultan Selim that represent him as an amiable and handsome youth, gentle in manners. 'Twould be a proud fate, Kate, to be a sultana, and sit on a throne!"

Kate smiled somewhat scornfully, but at that moment the Sitt Maryam entered the saloon, preceded by the Kishlar Aga, and advanced to where they were seated.

The Sitt Maryam (or Lady Mary) was a woman of medium size, and resembled most a bundle of clothes going to the wash, in the cumbrous walking-dress of an Oriental woman. Her face was hidden from view by the thick, white veil, all but the eyes, which shone through the wide slit above the *yashmak* with a roguish air.

She was followed by another woman, a Nubian slave, as tall as a man, but unvailed. This woman had regular, even handsome features, but was as black as a coal. She walked with great strides, and her arms were ornamented with massive gold bracelets, while her crimson turban set off her ebony complexion.

Sitt Maryam came quickly up to the divan, and spoke in unmistakable English, with a London accent.

"Young ladies, if you can get that ugly nigger out of the way, I shall be ever so much obliged to you. I want to talk to you where no one else can understand."

Kate stared in amazement at the free language of the other, but Sitt Maryam continued, quite undauntedly:

"Don't be frightened, Miss. I ain't what I seem, but if that nigger was to know it, there would be no end of a row; so get him out as quick as you can."

Kate, with quick presence of mind turned to Aimee, who only half understood all this rapid English and slang, and said, in French:

"This is a friend, come to help us. Get the slave out of the room."

Aimee, no whit behind the other in quickness, dismissed the Kishlar Aga with a message, and proceeded to welcome Sitt Maryam to a seat between them on the divan.

Hardly had the door closed on the retiring eunuch, when

the new-comer dropped the yashmak or veil, and disclosed to view a round, pretty face, full of fun, which Kate looked at in a sort of doubtful manner, as if she half recognized it.

"Don't you know me?" said the strange lady, with a giggle. "Lord bless you, I knew you when I first clapped eyes on you. But then you see, you haven't changed your togs, and I have. Don't you remember meeting a little middy-
ver at Naples, the night of the last ball? I'm Tommy Trevor, and Julian and I are going to rescue you, or die in the attempt."

And Tommy clenched his little fist with great valor.

CHAPTER XI.

AN UNEXPECTED INTERRUPTION.

KATE STUYVESANT and Aimee de Rivery were both too much astonished for a moment to do any thing more than stare at Tommy.

At last the French girl managed to ejaculate:

"*Mon Dieu, mon Dieu!* do you know that you are in terrible, terrible danger? If the Kiskadeezy Aga discovers that you are a boy, you will be killed at once. It is madness, this exploit."

"Not a bit of it," said Tommy, confidently. "Julian says I look just like a girl, and my voice hasn't broken yet."

"Julian!" exclaimed the lady, "and who is Julian?"

Tommy burst out laughing.

"What, don't you know? Well then we needn't fear if you don't recognize him. Look behind you, mademoiselle."

Aimee instinctively turned, and beheld the tall Nubian woman standing behind them, with solemn, impassive face, fanning the flies away with a huge fan of peacock's feathers. She looked at the slave with a puzzled face.

"I do not understand. Katerine, look, *cherie*, tell me if you know who this is."

But Kate was already staring hard at the Nubian.

"Who are you?" she asked, in low, trembling tones.

The Nubian woman answered not a word, but continued fanning with imperturbable gravity.

Tommy laughed again.

"You won't get her to speak, ladies," he said. "She was born deaf and dumb, and only understands signs. But this I will say, Miss Stuyvesant, for your benefit, that if you were to take off those woman's togs, and put old Fatima in a blue coat, with a gold swab on the shoulder, she'd look so much like Julian Cortlandt that you couldn't tell the difference, if you washed her face."

Kate had half risen, recognizing her cousin in the description, and was uttering some imprudent exclamation, when the Nubian placed a broad, powerful hand on her shoulder, and pressed her back on the couch, making a rapid sign for silence.

At the same moment, Fatima or Julian, whichever it was, caught up the end of a white yashmak and concealed her face all but the eyes, while Sitt Maryam as hastily veiled herself.

Kate was somewhat surprised, but her surprise was changed to terror a moment later, when she heard footsteps, and looking up, beheld the glittering figure of the Prince of Delos, approaching through the long vista of the great saloon, followed by the portly figure of the Kishlar Aga.

The corsair chief was in his Greek dress that day, and looked as handsome and evil as ever, as he advanced.

"Good-day, ladies," he said, in French in his oily tones. "I heard you had a visitor, and as my friend Sidi Mohammed has often permitted me to see his English wife, I determined to visit her myself."

As he spoke, he advanced, his glittering eyes fixed on the form of the pretended Sitt Maryam with a piercing glance.

Aimee de Rivery was the first of the party to recover her presence of mind, for it was evident that the corsair suspected something.

"In which character are we to take you, monsieur?" she asked, haughtily; "as the Moslem or as the Christian?"

"As the Moslem, while ashore," he answered, with a sneer.

"Then you must be aware that it is a privilege of the harem that lady guests remain veiled when the master of the house comes in."

"Very well," he replied, coolly; "then consider me a Christian for a few minutes. I wish to see your friend's face."

"Well, I like your imperence, I must say, Mr. Arnold," said the pretended Sitt Maryam, in a perfectly different voice to that of Tommy Trevor. "You ain't satisfied with a-pokin' of your nose in, when ladies is a-callin' on ladies, but you must be a-wantin' to see my face too. If I don't tell my 'usband when I get 'ome, drat me."

The prince listened attentively to this little speech, and seemed to be reassured somewhat. Then he glanced suspiciously at the tall Nubian.

"I guess it is you, after all, Maryam," he said, speaking English for the first time; "but who's that nigger? The Kiskar Aga says she walks like a man."

"Oh, Lor' bless your soul," said Sitt Maryam, laughing; "that's only my new slave, Fatima. She's as strong as a man, and she's deaf and dumb. I 'ad to pay a 'eavy price for 'er, I can tell you. You can see 'er face if you want to."

"I certainly do," said the corsair, with persistent suspicion.

"Fatima," said Sitt Maryam, "unvail that 'ere mug of yours. The gemman wants to 'ug you."

The corsair chief frowned, as he said:

"Aha, I thought she would not like to show her face. She does not obey."

"Lor' bless your soul, stoopid, 'ow can she? Didn't I tell ye she was deaf and dumb? Touch 'er on the shoulder, and p'int at me."

The chief did as he was requested, and the Nubian slave turned to Sitt Maryam, who made a rapid sign.

Instantly Fatima dropped her veil, and displayed to view a face of ebony, with teeth displayed in a broad grin. A countenance more unlike that of Julian Cortlandt could hardly be imagined.

The Prince of Delos looked long and earnestly at the face displayed, but Fatima showed no loss of composure under the ordeal.

At last he turned away, as if satisfied, and the negress replaced her veil with an air of triumph.

"I suppose it's all right, Sitt Maryam," he said, sullenly, "though why you should come to visit my harem, a thing you ave never done before, I don't see."

"Lor' bless the man, what would you 'ave?" asked Sitt Maryam in a tone of injury. "Ain't I been shut up in this beastly 'ole of a country long enough, without seein' a countrywoman, and when I 'ear of what's next door to one bein' taken, don't ye think I wan't to see 'er? It's all very well for you and Annytole. You're men, and when you get tired of these greasy Turks, you gets into your ships and you goes away for a sail. But we 'ave to stay 'ere, and go a-wisit'in' whenever we 'ears of one that speaks the same language. So if you don't like it, you can lump it, and put that in your pipe and smoke it, Mr. Arnold. So there."

During the delivery of this cockney harangue, the Corsair Prince had not uttered a word, but stood, with his lips firmly closed, looking angrily at Sitt Maryam.

When she had finished, he said, as he turned on his heel:

"Make the most of your visit. It's the last you have here. As for you, young ladies, prepare yourselves for a journey to-morrow. You have been here long enough, and I am losing money on you. Now that cursed Yankee frigate is captured, we can get out of port, and you will sail for Constantinople to-morrow."

So saying, he left the saloon, and the four confederates sat looking at one another, as if half-doubting their escape.

At last Kate Stuyvesant said:

"Oh, you bold boy, how I love you! You have saved us all."

"Not much in 'that,'" said Tommy, complacently. "You see, old Sidi Mohammed used to be a French barber once, named Anatole, and when the Lively Sally was brought in here, and the captain's daughter sold in the slave-market, he thought he'd like to have a European wife, instead of one of

those stupid Arab wenches. He was a bey in the bashaw's guards then, because he understood artillery a little, and had lots of money. So he bought her and married her, and she leads him a devil of a life—not but what she's a jolly old woman, and treated us splendidly—but I saw her last night, and 'twas she suggested this disguise, and all I had to do was to imitate her way of talking."

"But has the prince ever seen her face?"

"Ay, ay," said Tommy, mysteriously. "But that ain't all. The old woman told me a thing or two about him that opened my eyes. What it is, I'll tell you another time. Just now, we must talk business."

CHAPTER XII.

THE TWO KNIGHTS OF THE NIGHT.

THAT night it was understood that the Prince of Delos would leave the castle for business in the city, though the nature of the affair was not generally understood.

Before he left, he took care to re-enter the harem, and see with his own eyes whether the pretended Sitt Maryam was gone. He found the whole of the grand saloon in an uproar, and full of beautiful girls of every nationality, but the visitor was gone. In her stead were some sixty or seventy damsels, Moors, Arabs, Italians, Greeks, Spaniards and Circassians, dark-eyed Jewesses from Smyrna and Beyrout, swarthy Abyssinians, with great, melting black eyes, Kabyles from the mountains, girls of all kinds, only alike in one thing, that all were beautiful.

The daring corsair, whose mysteriously-acquired wealth had caused so much excitement in Naples, who had purchased immunity from every court in Southern Europe by his costly gifts, was a connoisseur in feminine beauty. Of every prize taken, he only selected the costliest part, leaving the rest to his crew, which he thus bound firmly to his cause. But it was an understood thing that all the women captured on any

prize belonged to the chief, who immediately bore them to his stronghold in Tripoli.

Once there, strange to say, they were safe. No one had ever seen the Prince of Delos enter the harem except in the daytime in the presence of all its inmates, whom he accosted with distant courtesy. At intervals of a few months, however there was a general clearance of the castle, a bevy of beauties being carried off in the night, put on shipboard, and carried away, no one knew whither.

It was rumored to-night that another of these clearances was in prospect, and the excitement in the harem was amazing. The chatter of voices in the great saloon was incessant, and as the prince entered, he was surrounded by an eager crowd of laughing girls, plying him with questions about their departure, which he answered by announcing that they were all to sail for Constantinople the next day.

At this was a general exclamation of joy, for, gorgeous as was the cage, the birds seemed to be growing tired of it, and a change was welcome.

"Where is the visitor who came to-day?" asked the corsair.

"Gone," said a dozen voices eagerly, "and the Frankish girls have been moping ever since."

"Let them mope," muttered the corsair, in a tone of satisfaction. "By to-morrow they will be safe."

Then he turned and left the harem, mounted his horse in the court of the castle, and rode off into Tripoli.

The echo of his horse-hoofs had not died away on the road, when a narrow window in one of the outer towers was thrown open, and Kate Stuyvesant put out her head to listen. Beside her, in a little turret chamber, stood Aimee de Rivery.

The chamber in which they were was at the end of a little suite of rooms that opened out of the harem apartments. It was a part of the castle but little used, and quite unguarded by the eunuchs, probably because they believed it safe from intruders.

The only egress into the outer air was through the turret window, which was barely wide enough for the passage of a single person, and that was at least fifty feet from the ground.

Moreover, that side of the castle was built at the edge of a cliff, that fell sheer down, some fifty feet more, so that alto-

gether, to delicate girls reared in seclusion, as Oriental women are, it might be deemed that the idea of escape on that side was impracticable.

Kate Stuyvesant leaned out of the window and listened to the hoofs of the robber's horse. The path which he was pursuing wound round and came out again at the foot of the precipice, below the turret, and as the moon shone bright, they could distinctly see the horseman on his way to the town.

Below them, stretching down the hill-side, lay the town of Tripoli, generally dark and cheerless, for there are no street lamps in the East, save in the palace of the bashaw himself, above the great fort on the Mole. The bashaw's palace was brilliantly illuminated, as also were the ships in the harbor, and the sounds of music rose in the air.

"There seems to be a feast," said Aimee, as she looked out.

"Yes," returned her companion, "I wonder what it can be? Never mind. We shall not care very long now. If Julian keeps his word—and when did he break it?—we shall be away from here very soon."

"Hark," said Aimee, starting, "there is the signal."

As she spoke, a long, quavering whistle came up from below and at the same time a white cloth was waved to and fro in the thick darkness that shrouded the bottom of the cliff, where the moonbeams fell not.

For answer the girls waved their handkerchiefs.

Then said Aimee within:

"Now for the rope. But I shall never dare go down there alone."

"I will," said Kate, firmly. "You don't know what a Zankée girl will do at a pinch, Aimee."

Now it might be seen in the turret chamber, that the two girls had at last divested themselves of their European dresses, and wore the light and more graceful costumes of the east, tight bodices with open sleeves, and full trousers gathered at the ankles. In these dresses they were capable of exertions that would have been impossible in the narrow skirt and stiff corsets of Europe.

Aimee hurriedly produced a long slender cord from under

a heap of cushions on the divan, and threw the end out of the window. The girls kept on paying it out, till over a hundred feet had been sent forth, when they felt a slight tug at the end, three times repeated.

"They have it," whispered Kate, anxiously. "Run to the door, Aimee, and see if any one is looking."

The young creole stole to the door of the turret chamber, and looked out. The next room was empty, but she was not satisfied till the whole suit had been explored, nearly to the saloon.

A glance there satisfied her that the inmates of the harem were at their usual tasks in the evening, singing, and otherwise amusing themselves for their captivity.

She knew that she and her friend were disliked by the rest on account of their secluding themselves, and she did not therefore fear being intruded on that night.

As she came back to the turret, she was careful to close every one of the doors of communication from room to room, extinguishing the lights, so that any one approaching might be forced to give some warning. Then she stole back to the turret chamber, and found Kate busily pulling in the slender cord which they had let out of the window.

"Come and help, Aimee," she panted. "There's something very heavy on this cord."

Aimee came to her assistance, and the two girls working away, at last succeeded in bringing in over the sill a strong rope, with a great grappling hook at the end of it.

A moment later the hook was fixed inside the window, and Kate leaned out and waved her handkerchief.

"Thank God, they are coming at last," she said.

Aimee looked keenly at the grappling-hook. She saw that it was firmly fixed under the stone molding inside the window, and the trembling motion of the hooks told her that some one was ascending the rope.

Quietly but anxiously the two girls stood back and waited.

In about five minutes more the head of a black man made its appearance, and Kate uttered a faint scream of surprise, as Julian Cortlandt, disguised as a black slave, but no longer wearing woman's clothes, sprung into the apartment, and gathered his cousin into his arms.

A moment later, Tommy Trevor, in the guise of a Persian dancing-girl, came flying into the apartment, to be hugged, in his turn, by Aimee de Rivery, who cried :

“ You little darling, you’re worth ten grown men ”

And little Tommy blushed with delight.

CHAPTER XIII.

NOW FOR IT!

“ Now, girls,” said Tommy, as soon as the first congratulations were over, “ our task is only beginning. We have to pass from here to the house of Sidi Mohammed, and hide in his harem before we are safe, and to do that there is only one safe path—out of this window. Which of you dares to follow down the rope ?”

Kate and Aimee both hesitated. They had looked down already, and the sight of the dizzy precipice below was enough to scare a bolder person.

Julian Cortlandt saw their hesitation, and spoke :

“ I see no way to leave the castle but this, young ladies, but it is by no means so difficult as you would think. There are knots on the rope at every two or three feet, and one of us will go out below each of you to take care of you. It is useless to stay here debating. Kate Stuyvesant, will you trust yourself to me, or will you go to Constantinople to be sold for a slave ?”

“ Julian, can you ask ?”

Kate’s face grew crimson and she made a step to the window. Then, as she looked out, she shuddered and recoiled. The prospect appalled her.

Julian smiled, and climbed out of the window again.

“ Now will you come ?” he asked, as he grasped the rope, and stood on one of the upper knots, looking into the chamber.

Kate was reassured at this, and approached the window again.

"Do not look down," continued her lover. "The rope will bear four or five of us, if necessary. Remember, if you fall, I shall be below to catch you. So. Now climb on the window-sill. Look into the room. Now let your feet drop outside, but keep hold of the rope. Nay, nay, now you have gone that far, you must come further. See!"

As he spoke, he caught his fair cousin round the waist, and commenced the descent of the rope, holding her on one arm. Kate uttered a shriek of terror, turned and clasped both arms round his neck, and held fast.

Relieved of the weight on his arm, the American was able to use both hands on the rope, keeping his fair charge between him and the castle-wall all the time.

"Don't scream," he whispered; "for the love of heaven, don't scream. If we attract attention now, we are lost. Cling tight round my neck, and let all your weight hang on me."

Proceeding in this manner in the descent was a matter of comparative ease, for Kate Stuyvesant happened to be one of the lightest of weights. Had it been a question of ascent, the matter would have been not quite so easy.

Still, with all of Julian's strength and practice in such exploits, from a sailor's life, he was heartily glad when his feet struck the edge of the rocky cliff on which the castle was built, where a ledge at least three feet broad existed, on which he stood to rest a little.

"Kate, Kate," he whispered, earnestly; "put down your feet, we are on land. You will exhaust me, and we shall both fall."

Kate did as she was bid, mechanically. During the whole of her perilous passage, she had kept her eyes fast closed, and her face on her lover's breast, trusting to him with a blind sort of confidence. Now she stood, half-leaning against the wall, half-clinging to Julian, and gave one shuddering glance around her.

She found herself, as it were, between heaven and earth, the steep wall above her, below her, empty, black space.

The sight was too much for the delicately-nurtured girl. Her nerves gave way.

The next moment Julian felt her sinking away, a lifeless

weight, from his arms, and realized that she had fainted. Here was a pretty position.

But Julian was a man of too much nerve and coolness to lose his presence of mind, even in such a strait. Around his waist he wore, over the white tunic and drawers of the slave, a long sash of red silk, girt several times around him.

Supporting Kate against the wall, he hastily unwound his sash and passed it firmly around both their waists, so as to leave both his hands free for the rope. Then grasping the cord again, he swung off, and commenced the second descent.

This was much less difficult than the other, inasmuch as the precipice was not completely perpendicular, and jutting rocks gave many a precarious foothold.

While nearly half-way down, he felt the cord trembling and looking up espied two figures following one another down from the turret window.

Both wore the tight bodice and loose trowsers of the public dancing-girls, a disguise which Tommy had suggested for the whole party, as well on account of its convenience as because it would save them from questions in the streets.

Then he knew that Tommy and Aimee were following.

At that he quickened his pace, and after a few more minutes of vigorous exertion, he felt his feet touch the ground.

Then at last he sunk exhausted, and realized how severe had been his labors, carrying the lifeless weight of his cousin.

But she was saved, and they were both out of the castle and on firm ground again. So much was certain. The fainting-fit and the shriek were both very inopportune at such a moment, but Julian had no time to think of the perils past.

The future was now his concern, and first of all his cousin's recovery, for otherwise their labor was vain.

To his joy, before very long, he perceived symptoms of recovery.

The loosening of the sash with which he had bound Kate to himself had a reviving effect of itself, for the girl uttered a long sigh.

Julian laid her out extended on the earth, and the cold

ground helped her to come to, for a moment later she opened her eyes and faintly called out :

" Julian, where are you, where are you ?"

" Here, and all safe, Kate," he anxiously replied. " We are on the ground at last, and for heaven's sake don't let us have any more fainting, Kate. We're not out of danger yet. See, there comes Mademoiselle de Rivery down the ladder all alone, following Tommy. Don't allow America to be shamed, Kitty. That little French girl has more pluck than you, I do truly believe."

His last words had the effect he intended them to have, for he spoke as coldly and cuttingly as he could. They roused the high-spirited girl from the nervous state into which she had fallen, and nettled and piqued her considerably. Instantly she started up from the ground, declining his proffered hand, and observed, with considerable heat :

" Cousin Julian, I think you're a brute to talk to a lady like that."

Julian laughed provokingly. He knew that if he soothed her, she would probably fall into the same helpless state as before, and he wished to keep her strung up till the crisis was over.

A few moments later, the other fugitives reached the ground. Tommy first, and Aimee de Rivery was so much exhausted with her novel trip through the air that she fell prostrate to the earth, and lay there panting and unable to rise.

Julian said not a word, but left them, and went to a recess in the rocks, from whence he produced a small flask, which he brought back and held to Aimee's lips.

" Drink, mademoiselle," he said, briefly. " It is vile stuff, but it will give us all strength for what is before us."

At the same moment Tommy uttered a cautious " Hush !"

" Crouch low," he whispered. " I hear footsteps."

Instantly every one was prostrate on the earth.

CHAPTER XIV.

A YANKEE MAMELUKE.

THE place in which the fugitives were gathered was once the site of a stone quarry, for a projecting spur of the hill had been cut away into a deep crescent, thereby making the side of the castle more inaccessible than formerly.

On this account it was now in deep shadow, while the moonbeams lay full on the road outside, so that the chances were against any one on the road discovering the fugitives so long as they remained still.

A sound of horses' hoofs was heard on the road outside, coming from the direction of the open country, and the noise of voices in conversation, the deep, guttural tones of which proclaimed them to be Arabs.

In a few moments more a large party, with gleaming spears, came cantering round the spur of the hill, and rode straight into the very quarry where the fugitives were hiding.

Julian's heart gave a great thump as the foremost horseman entered the quarry, but when he was followed by the rest, he gave up all hope of escape, and spoke to his companions, saying :

"Sit up and get into a group. We can not hide from them, and they may ride over us, if we lie down."

As he spoke, he sat up, and the frightened girls clung to him on either side. Tommy Trevor stood up in front of the little party, as if he was determined to protect them.

As soon as the Arabs discovered that the quarry contained other persons than themselves, there was considerable bustle observable among them. Julian noticed, to his surprise, that they did not utter the usual yells and cries of their people, and he augured well from it.

Four or five of the intruders rode toward him, and surrounded the little group with leveled spears, while one of them demanded something which none of our fugitives could understand, except Aimée de Rivery, as it was in Arabic.

It had been already settled, to avoid the necessity of disagreeable exposures, that Julian, whose negro dress fitted him for the part of a mute, should on all occasions pretend to be dumb, while the fact of the other three of the party being apparently females, would save them from any questions among the punctilious Orientals.

Julian therefore rose to his feet in silence, and by signs explained to them his inability to speak.

The horseman who seemed to be the leader waved him to one side with his spear, and addressed his questions to the women, who were now all closely veiled.

He spoke in a quick, stern tone, and Aimée whispered to Kate :

"He wants to know who we are and how we come here. What shall I tell him, Kate? Assist me with your powers of invention."

"Oh, I don't know. How can I tell?" cried Kate, bewildered. "Tell them we are going to Tripoli. Tell them any thing."

It will be observed that Kate had completely lost her presence of mind in the perils that surrounded her. Her nerves, quite shattered by the physical peril she had undergone in descending from the castle window, were no longer those of the girl who had so haughtily faced the corsair prince, a few hours before. So much was she confused that she spoke aloud, in English.

To the surprise of everybody, no sooner had she spoken, than a loud, stern voice among the Arabs uttered some quick command, and instantly the spear-points were thrown up, and the horsemen retreated, while a man rode forward and called out, *in English* :

"Who are you, ladies? Fear not. We are friends, if you are Christians."

Julian Cortlandt was the first to answer.

"Who are you, in Heaven's name? We are Americans trying to escape."

"Americans!" cried the stranger, joyfully. "Thank Heaven we found you. I am Eaton, the American consul, and my party belongs to the army of Prince Hamet. Who are you that speaks?"

In a few words Julian explained his position, and the stranger entered into a long harangue to the Arabs, which ended in their dismounting from their horses and gathering in a silent group in the dark quarry.

Julian Cortlandt had heard that the reigning bashaw of Tripoli, Yussuff Carameli, was an usurper, having murdered his brother, whose son, Prince Hamet, had fled the country, to Egypt.

He had heard rumors, also, that Mr. Eaton, the American consul to Tripoli, when the war broke out, had departed for Egypt, to organize an expedition with Prince Hamet, in aid of the American naval war. All this had been rumor.

Now he found himself face to face with the results of Eaton's bold stroke, and the providential meeting had probably saved all their lives.

A moment later, all the horsemen were gathered in silence in the quarry, while Eaton was conversing eagerly in a low tone with Julian.

By the side of the American consul stood a young man, whose heedless face, even in the deep shadow, proclaimed him to be quite a boy. So much of his dress as could be seen under the ample white bournous which he wore, seemed to be covered with gold, and splendid beyond measure.

He took occasional part in the conversation, in broken English, which he spoke with hesitation, but seemed to understand very well, and he was always addressed with great respect by Eaton. This, Julian quickly realized, was none other than the dethroned and banished Prince Hamet himself, whose life had been, and was to be, such a tissue of romantic adventure.

"Mr. Cortlandt," said Eaton, in his quick, energetic manner, "it was a lucky chance that brought us here. We heard of the wreck of the Portland, and also that she had been towed off the rocks and got into the harbor. You see the illuminations below. They are joy fires in honor of her capture, and that is your old vessel out there, lighted up, and lying under the guns of the Bashaw's Fort."

"But how can that be?" asked Julian. "Before we left her, we took care to scuttle her. I ordered the party

down myself to do the work, while the gunboats were coming up."

"Be that as it may, they've stopped the leaks and towed her in, for there she lies."

And the consul pointed to a ship in the harbor, with only her lower masts standing, while the lights shone from her open line of ports.

Julian looked with much interest down at his old ship. He had never thought to see her again, but it was gall and wormwood to him, as a sailor, and still more as an officer, to see her in the hands of the enemy. He turned impatiently away to Eaton.

The ex-consul, a handsome black-bearded fellow, who looked more Oriental than the Moors themselves, save for his quick, energetic *Yankee* manner, was in all particulars of his dress a Turkish soldier, and armed to the teeth.

"And how is it," asked Julian, anxiously, "that we find you here so close to the bashaw's stronghold?"

Eaton smiled proudly.

"We came to reconnoiter, and our men are wont to go anywhere that a horse can go. You have heard of the Mamelukes?"

"Who has not? The French have celebrated them all over Europe."

"Exactly. Well, you know that Bonaparte routed them from Egypt, by the force of his genius."

"I know it. But he had to admit that they were the finest cavalry in the world, for all that."

"You say true. They are. Well, look round you. These men are all Mamelukes."

Julian started.

"Ay, Mamelukes. Any man of this party can cut a man in half with a blow of his cimeter, or pick up an apple with a lance-point at speed. They were wandering about Egypt, disbanded, and we found no difficulty in enlisting hundreds. Our Kabyles will do the rest."

Julian looked around with fresh interest. He had heard of the terrible Egyptian Mamelukes, but had never seen them. Now he found himself in their midst; and these silent, grave men were the far-famed horsemen of Egypt.

"What made you halt here?" he asked.

CHAPTER XV.

THE MAMELUKES "AT HOME."

EATON answered the question in a low voice.

"We are waiting for some one."

"Whom?"

"The owner of this castle."

"What, the Prince of Delos?"

"The Prince of Delos? No. Who is he?"

"The owner of this castle."

"You mistake. The owner of this castle is Arnoul Bey chief of the most dangerous squadron of corsairs on the coast."

"I know that he calls himself the Prince of Delos, in Europe."

"In Europe? What? Have you seen Arnoul Bey in Europe?"

"Whatever his name be, I've seen the owner of this castle at a royal ball in Naples, where he was known as the Prince of Delos, the richest banker in Europe, they told me."

Eaton gave a low whistle.

"So, so. I thought I knew every thing about this gentleman; but I find he is deep. Do you know who he really is?"

"I think he is an American."

Eaton started.

"What makes you think so?"

"I have heard him speak English, and he used American words. Once he said, 'I guess.'"

"Mr. Cortlandt," said the ex-consul, "you are right. Arnoul Bey is an American. *Who* he is, no one knows but myself, and I shall not tell, till the proper time comes."

"But what are you waiting for?"

"For his return. I saw him leave the castle and ride toward the town. When he comes back, we shall capture him."

"What is your object?"

"Our object! To take him prisoner. Such a man is worth more than any man in Tripoli save the bashaw."

"Then why not take the castle?"

"Easily said. Not so easily done. We could not go in."

"Why not?" asked Julian. "Come with me, General, and I'll show you a way."

He led the General—Eaton was always called so—back to the foot of the cliff, and put into his hands the end of the rope, which still dangled from the turret window.

"On that rope I went into the castle not half an hour ago. Why should not you send up a party by the same road?"

The General examined the rope with silent attention, and then turned to Julian with animated earnestness.

"Mr. Cortlandt, if you are not mistaken, you have performed a service to America that money will not pay. On what does this rope depend?"

"On iron grappling-hooks under the stone sill of a window, a hundred feet overhead. If our escape has not been discovered, the castle may be surprised."

"Then there is no time to lose," said Eaton, quickly.

He turned to Prince Hamet, and spoke rapidly and earnestly in Arabic. A moment later, the Mamelukes were clustered round them, listening to explanations, and Julian found, from their low, eager tones and gestures, that volunteers to ascend the rope were numerous.

Selecting a party who seemed to be the most powerful men in the whole number, the American General threw off his long bournous, tightened his sash, threw his pistols to the back, instead of in front, so as to incumber his motions as little as possible, then, followed by Julian, who only carried a cimeter, he commenced the ascent of the rope, aided by the knots provided for the purpose.

When they were about fifty feet up, two more followed, and in a quarter of an hour some thirty men were crowded together in the little turret chamber.

They found all quiet there. The precaution adopted by Aimee, of closing all the doors in the suite of rooms between the turret and the grand saloon, had proved efficacious, and the castle was still and silent in that quarter.

"Now, Mr. Cortlandt," said Eaton, in a low tone, "as you have been in the castle, you probably know the way. We must trust to your guidance. We have no time to lose, for Arnoul Bey may be back at any moment and spoil all our plans."

"Forward, then," said Julian, cheerfully.

Drawing his keen cimeter, he stole forward and opened the door. The next room was in total darkness, so much so that they could not see the opposite door, but a faint sound, as of distant music, indicated its position.

While Julian was groping his way forward, he heard the ticking of a flint and steel behind him, and a faint bluish glow lighted up the room. One of his followers had lighted a match, and enabled him to see the opposite door. In a moment he was there, and flung it open, revealing a long corridor, at the end of which appeared a thin line of light on the floor under a door which was shut.

The sound of music came plainly through that door.

The sweet voices of girls and the tinkle of mandolins, the clicking of castanets and the soft shuffle of dancing feet announced that they were near the harem at last. Behind the frail barrier of that doorway, lay the mysteries of Arnoul Bey's harem.

Julian's pulse quickened as he stole forward. Behind him came a long line of Mamelukes, great stalwart men, expert in all bodily exercises, armed to the teeth, the very cream of Eastern warfare, headed by the Yankee, General Eaton.

In another moment his hand was on the door. It yielded, flew open, and a blaze of light burst on their senses.

The great saloon, from its tessellated floor to its gilded roof vaulted with bright-hued mosaics, was all ablaze with hundreds of lamps. The variegated marble columns, in stately vista, encircled the grand dome, and stretched away in long gleaming corridors, like the rays of a star from the central hall. Light and beautiful figures of girls in rich, bright-hued dresses were springing to and fro in graceful dances among the white statues, as beautiful as themselves, to the music of a score of lovely creatures, who sat on the great central divan, playing on the mandolins and singing in chorus a plaintive Oriental melody.

The opening of the door had been so quiet, that for a moment it was unnoticed. The dance went on, the same as before, and Julian and his comrades remained gazing, spell-bound.

The next moment they heard the shrill cry of warning from one of the branching corridors, and the fat figure of the Kiskar Aga was seen to rush forward, followed by three or four of his mute assistants, brandishing their keen cimeters.

The spell was broken.

With a deep-toned shout of triumph, very different from the shrill utterances of the degraded mutes, Julian, Eaton, and the Mamelukes, dashed into the saloon, sword in hand.

In a moment a scene of the wildest confusion ensued. With shrieks of alarm the terrified girls huddled together in groups and tried to hide themselves by crouching under the statues and covering themselves with the cushions of the divans.

Their great anxiety seemed to be to hide their faces from the gaze of man, but the intruders paid little attention to them just then.

Forward, boys, cut down the slaves, and take the castle," cried Eaton, as he rushed at the Kiskar Aga. "No time for the girls."

He was obeyed implicitly.

With a rush like a whirlwind, the Mamelukes passed through the grand saloon, and swept away the surprised eunuchs like chaff.

The fat old Kiskar Aga was the only one to show fight, perhaps because he was too fat to run away. He aimed a desperate blow at Julian, which the latter caught on his cimeter, and then, pressing forward on the chief eunuch, ran him through the body.

A moment later he was left almost alone, for while he was extricating his sword from the Kiskar Aga's body, the rest of the party had rushed on down the corridor, in pursuit of the flying mutes.

Julian Cortlandt cast one hasty glance round him, ere he followed.

The saloon was all silent now, the terrified women having ceased to scream, as they huddled together. Then he turned

and ran after his comrades down the long corridor, to the head of the broad stone staircase that he remembered having ascended from the castle court that day.

When he got there the court was a terrible scene of strife. The negro guard, brave and faithful to the last, had entered into a fierce contest with the Mamelukes, having turned out to the help of their comrades.

The Mamelukes were a little the superiors in point of numbers, but their great advantage seemed to be in strength and skill in the use of weapons, besides which they had pistols with them, and the harem guards carried only cimeters.

With all their disadvantages, the mutes fought bravely, and it was only after a fierce and stubborn contest that the invaders took possession of the court.

When they did, it was full of dead bodies. The devoted eunuchs had fought like men, and not one had yielded living.

But the castle was taken.

CHAPTER XVI.

BAGGING A PRINCE.

AN hour later, the castle of Arnoul Bey, or the Prince of Delos, whichever might be his name, was to all appearance quiet and peaceful.

The horsemen had disappeared from the quarry under the walls, the gates were shut, and all was dark and silent outside. Only from the windows of the grand saloon, which was situated high up in the old donjon of the castle, a flood of light streamed, and the sounds of music came faintly thence. The beauties of the harem, freed from their terrors by the mild treatment of the victors, were gayly celebrating their release from the surveillance of the Kiskar Aga and his mutes.

Down in the castle court, a different scene was taking place. Some seventy or eighty horses, magnificently caparisoned, and all of the rarest blood of Arabia, stood in silent lines, waiting

the behest of their masters, who stood near by or occupied the guard-house.

The Mamelukes were waiting for Arnoul Bey.

Outside the closed gate was a single horseman, a dark, silent Mameluke, who was looking intently down the moonlit road, toward Tripoli.

At the next turn of the road, as it curved around the spur of the hill, stood a second horseman, as silent and watchful as the first.

This was Eaton himself.

At the edge of the stone quarry was a single person on foot, a small, slight figure, dressed as a Persian dancing-girl.

The girl was truly a boy, little Tommy Trevor, who had volunteered to watch at that perilous post.

Below them lay the city of Tripoli, and the sounds of the kettle-drums and cymbals, with the lights that gleamed from ship and palace, told that the feast was at its height.

Suddenly Tommy, who from his post commanded the best view of the road below, stepped out into the moonlight, and waved a white handkerchief.

It was the signal agreed on, for some one approaching.

Then the lad shrunk back into the shadow.

By this time the moon, in her onward course, had approached the edge of the quarry, and her light filled the front half of the excavation. The road below was nearly light as day, and the silence was so deep that the tramp of horses' feet could be heard a mile off.

No sooner had Tommy made his silent signal, than the boy glided back to the foot of the castle walls, and began to ascend the rope that had already proved so useful to our friends.

At the same moment Eaton turned his horse, and rode slowly back to the castle gate, which slowly swung open at his approach.

The American leader rode in, and uttered a few brief orders to his men.

Prince Hamet was the first to mount his horse, and, a few minutes after, there was a hurrying within the castle, down the corridors, as all the Mamelukes who had been in the grand saloon among the harem beauties came hurrying out to the summons of their leaders.

Julian Cortlandt, who was standing watching, thought he had never seen such splendid-looking fellows, as they ran across the court and leaped on their horses. Every man was a trained athlete, handsome in face and figure, for the Mamelukes were picked out from childhood, from among the finest Georgian and Circassian slaves, and trained up to nothing but war. Every man among them carried his fortune on his back in gold and silver embroidery and inlaid weapons, his dress being gorgeous in the extreme.

That all this bravery of costume had not spoiled them for soldiers was soon evident for they abandoned the seductions of the grand saloon as quickly as if they had never tasted them, and in a few minutes were ranged in their saddles, silent and attentive, before the open gate of the castle court.

Meanwhile, out on the road below the castle, the sound of hoofs was approaching at a canter. Not one horse alone was coming, but at least twenty.

The Mameluke on guard outside the gate, when Eaton came back, had moved forward to take his place at the angle of the road, and now sat like a statue on his horse, waiting for the new-comers. Presently they came in sight, nearly up to the stone quarry, and suddenly halted.

A glittering horseman rode out in front, and looking up the castle wall, raised a pistol.

The Mameluke's eyes followed the direction of the other's gaze, and he beheld the slight figure of the disguised boy, half way up the castle wall, and still moving up the rope to the window.

Then a clear, loud voice hailed Tommy, in Arabic.

The boy made no answer, but climbed up faster.

The Mameluke vidette quietly raised the carbine which hung by his side, turned his horse to the right, and leveled his piece at the horseman in the road.

A second hail came from the road, sharp and menacing.

It was still unanswered, although Tommy paused and looked down.

The next minute two flashes and as many reports followed one another in swift succession.

The horseman had fired at Tommy, the Mameluke had fired at the horseman.

Tommy Trevor uttered a sharp cry in the air, and climbed on. The bullet had grazed his side, and spurred him to fresh exertions. A moment afterward he was within ten feet of the window-sill.

But the horseman in the road was not even grazed. The deceptive moonlight had frustrated the aim of the Mameluke and the bullet went singing away over the stranger's head.

No sooner had he fired, than the vidette turned his horse and galloped away, while the stranger, shouting out some orders to his followers, dashed after in pursuit. Apparently he had concluded that the boy was safe where he was.

Away clattered the vidette up the road toward the castle gate, in the full moonlight, and after him came Arnoul Bey or the Prince of Delos, whichever he might be called, with twenty horsemen behind him, glittering with gold.

The corsair rode a splendid gray Arab, and dashed boldly up to the castle gate, as if reckless of peril.

Not a sound was heard, till he and his followers were almost opposite the gate, the vidette having galloped by.

Then, on a sudden, with a yell like hounds in full cry, out swept a whirlwind of horsemen, and overwhelmed the corsair and his band, while shouts and cries, cuts and pistol-shots, were freely exchanged for several seconds.

Julian Cortlandt was standing at a window over the guard-room, anxiously watching the conflict, but unable to join it, having neither horse nor firearms. He saw every cut clearly in the bright moonlight, and his blood curdled, in spite of his training, at the manner in which the fighting was carried on.

At every cut, one might see a ghastly gash, as the keen blades, ground to razor-like edge, flashed in the air and fell again.

Heads fell to the ground, arms, dissevered from their trunks, were trampled under foot; now and then a horse's head was cut off by mistake. Inside of two minutes the corsair's followers were almost exterminated, while several Mamelukes had bitten the dust. The only person uninjured was the corsair himself.

Arnoul Bey seemed to bear a charmed life, as he raged through the contest, making his gray mare bound from side

to side, while his blade whirled in fiery circles round his head. Not a blade had touched him so far, though the razor-like swords were cutting and slashing at him from every direction.

Julian hardly wondered at this, however. It was evident to him that the corsair was a perfect master of the sword from the way he handled his weapon, whereas the Mamelukes, fearful cutters as they were, never seemed to think of self-defense, as they made their sweeping blows, throwing themselves open to a return at every one, had their opponents been Europeans.

But skillful as he was, it was plain that the corsair was overmatched now. He seemed to recognize it himself, as soon as Julian, for, a moment later, firing a pistol into the thick of his foes, he turned and fled away toward the black tents of the Arabs, as fast as his steed could carry him, followed by Eaton's Mamelukes, in full chase.

CHAPTER XVII.

MAMELUKE AGAINST CORSAIR.

JULIAN watched pursuers and pursued till he could see them no longer, as they disappeared over a swell of ground toward the Arab encampment. He was too low down to see over the swell.

Then he looked anxiously round him to examine his own position, and discovered, not without some alarm, that he was left alone. Not another man was visible, in or about castle or court, and both Kate and Aimee de Rivery had disappeared.

The latter, he knew, were probably in the saloon, and he hastily closed the gate of the castle to make all secure, then crossed the court, and rushed up the corridor to the grand saloon to seek his friends.

On his way he encountered troops of girls roaming, laughing about the lonely castle, seemingly intoxicated with their

new-found liberty. Several of them accosted him with coquettish freedom, but he remembered his part of a mute, and merely shook his head and passed on.

When he entered the grand saloon only a few people were there, but he soon espied the light figure of Aimee de Rivery, who was coming toward him with Kate, rejoiced at his reappearance.

A moment later Tommy Trevor came running in from the turret chamber, which he had succeeded in gaining by means of the rope.

Tommy was pale and excited.

"Come quick," he exclaimed. "We've no time to lose, Julian. There's quite a crowd of cavalry coming up this way from the city. The whole road is alive with them. I fear our Mamelukes will get cut to pieces."

Here was an unexpected piece of news.

It became evident that if our friends wished to keep their freedom they must get out of the castle and into the city as quick as possible, for Sidi Mohammed's house was their only asylum of safety. As for Prince Hamet's army, the main body of that was too far to the eastward to help them, and Eaton's reconnoitering party might well be called a forlorn hope.

Julian was not a man to hesitate long when danger pressed. He started for the castle court with the girls, without any very clear idea of where he was going, it is true, but with a notion of getting away in some manner.

Kate Stuyvesant seemed to have quite recovered her firmness now. The danger of being dashed to pieces had appalled her. The new danger seemed to brace her up again.

In a short time they were in the castle court, and found it full of girls. All was still near the castle, but they could hear the sounds of very sharp firing a little distance off, in the direction in which the Arab encampment was pitched.

Julian opened the gate and passed outside into the moonlight, only to draw back the next minute, run in and slam to the gate.

"It's too late," he said, hurriedly. "Here they come."

Then round the curve of the road at the side of the cas-

tle they heard the tumultuous clatter of hundreds of horse-hoofs, and presently, past the gate swept a crowd of horsemen at full speed without any particular order, but all hurrying on toward the sound of the firing.

They wore the brown bournouses and white turbans universal in Tripoli, and one could see their brown, eager faces and flashing eyes, as they eagerly pressed forward past the gate, not noticing what was going on in the castle.

It was several minutes, rapid though the pace was, before the column had passed, if column it could be called, where there was little or no order.

When the last horseman had disappeared over the swell, Julian beckoned to his charges and the four ran out of the castle.

By an inspiration of which he was not conscious till the moment of execution, Julian locked the castle gate from the outside, and hung the key to his girdle.

"Come," he said, "if, Arnoul Bey wants to get in again, he must ask me for a pass. Those girls may want to tell tales about us if they get out. So they are just as well in there."

Close to the castle gate, he had noticed something that had determined his flight, and promised to render it practicable. During the fight between Arnoul Bey and the Mamelukes, at least twenty men had been killed, and of their horses, some dozen were quietly feeding round near their dead masters, with the true Arab docility.

It was a work of no difficulty whatever to secure these animals and select four of the finest. The deep Arab saddles, with high backboards and broad shovel stirrups were exactly the things to assist timid riders to feel confidence, and both Kate and Aimee had often ridden at home, side-saddle fashion.

They hesitated of course at the method they were now compelled to adopt, but the fear of capture overcame their timidity. A few minutes later, Julian, Tommy, and the two girls were mounted on the magnificent steeds of as many Mamelukes, and careering away.

The sense of freedom and independence acquired by a released captive who suddenly finds himself on a powerful

and swift horse is peculiarly exhilarating, and our fugitives felt it in full.

But whither did they fly?

Julian answered the question by turning his horse toward the sounds of the distant fight, and galloping straight toward it. The possession of four swift horses had altered his plans.

He had deliberately determined to join the Mamelukes whether victorious or defeated, and flee to the army of Prince Hamet Caramelli.

He rode in the advance with Kate, while Tommy Trevor and the French girl followed close behind. Tommy, being a sailor boy, was no rider.

In a citizen's saddle, he would have been pitched off in no time. The deep Arabian tree, with its lofty pommel and cantle was a very different thing, and the habit of the Mamelukes, of riding with short stirrups, was very comforting to Tommy, who like all green hands on a horse, depended on his stirrups entirely. Not quite so nice to his unaccustomed hands was the powerful Mameluke bit, which would not admit of the slightest pressure without causing the horse to rear. But the boy soon obviated that inconvenience by letting go the bridle altogether, and hanging manfully on to the high pommel. His horse flew like the wind, then.

In less than a minute they were on the crest of the swell that had hitherto hidden the combatants from view, and looked down.

A tumultuous swaying mass of horsemen was visible in the moonlight at the edge of the Arab encampment, and as they looked, the whole mass was sparkling with bright flashes while the crackling of fire-arms was incessant.

Which party was in the ascendant?

It was hard to tell, but it was clear that if Eaton and his Mamelukes were in there, they must be immensely outnumbered.

Undecided what to do, Julian pulled up. It would never do to venture into the midst of such a conflict with two delicate girls. Turning his horse, he walked the animal slowly along the ridge skirting the fight and watching its progress.

Presently came a stern, deep-toned shout from the midst

of the fierce confusion, and the whole mass seemed to be rent asunder as if by a flash of lightning. The next moment, out of the confusion rode a black column of horsemen four abreast, whose close, compact order was a remarkable contrast to the clouds of their disorderly opponents, and cantered forth on the plain, sweeping away all opposition. From the flank of this column—the left—came an incessant stream of bright flashes that told of carbine fire well sustained. From the other, the enemy shrunk back, as if afraid to tempt the edge of the cimeters that flashed in the moonlight.

Julian recognized the power of discipline as he looked. It was clear that Eaton, by introducing European tactics among these wild horsemen had trebled their powers. Unequaled as warriors with weapons, they had only needed this infusion to become invincible.

Without further hesitation the fugitives galloped down at full speed to join the Mamelukes.

CHAPTER XVIII.

A REMARKABLE REVELATION.

THEY were just in time, for as they neared the column, they heard a loud shout to their right, and distinguished the glittering figure of the corsair chief, bearing down at the head of a large party of Arabs to intercept them.

Julian seized his cousin's rein, shouted to the horses, and flew away toward the head of the column as fast as the good steeds could carry them.

The Mamelukes seemed to recognize who he was, for they turned the head of the column down to meet them, and delivered such a rattling volley that their Arab foes fell back in dismay, leaving a broad, clear space round them.

A few moments later, Julian and his fair charge were received into the bosom of this formidable column, which then closed sternly up and moved majestically on.

"Well done, Mr. Cortlandt," cried the bluff voice of Eaton, as he rode down the flank of the column. "We've given them a lesson they'll not forget, this time, with all their numbers. Now, hey for the army. But where are your two lady friends?"

Then Julian looked round, and recognized, for the first time, that he was alone with Kate.

Tommy Trevor and Aimée de Rivery had disappeared.

A shout of triumph from the edge of the incircling crowd soon told their whereabouts. Julian ground his teeth as he recognized that they were captured.

But there was neither time nor force sufficient to go after them. The Mamelukes, who had entered the confines of Tripoli about eighty strong, were reduced to less than sixty unwounded men, after the odds which they had encountered.

True, what remained was invincible. Its foes hung aloof and did not dare to charge again, remembering the rough reception they had already met with. Nevertheless, Eaton and Prince Hamet were obliged to retreat, without making an effort to rescue the two prisoners, and Julian was compelled, sorely against his will, to abandon Tommy Trevor and the little Creole girl to their fate.

Once in motion now, there was no serious pursuit. The Arabs had suffered too severely at the hands of the athletic Mamelukes to desire a closer acquaintance, and they contented themselves with following at a distance.

"How was it that you stirred up such a hornets' nest?" asked Julian, some time after, as they rode on at an easy amble, watched by a strong party of Arabs.

"Faith, you're as wise as I," answered Eaton. "We chased Arnoul Bey into the middle of his friends' camp, and raised a pretty bobbery, I can tell you. The Arabs came piling out of their tents, in very good style, I must say, for men surprised. You know these fellows are always being surprised, so they're used to it. But our first charge sent them all flying, some afoot, some on bare-backed horses. Then there was lively work for a while, and I do believe we might have taken that blackguard, Arnold, but for the coming up of those fellows in the rear, who compelled us to turn."

"But you were immensely overmatched."

"In numbers, yes; but any one of our Mamelukes could handle three of the other fellows. Better arms, better horses, better swordsmen. Old Bonaparte had to own that. Well, I've taught them what they wanted: how to act together. Now they don't fear any odds. No more do I."

"I must own you have a splendid troop. But I notice one thing, General—that you call this Arnoul Bey, *Arnold*. What does that mean?"

"Do you remember the traitor, Benedict Arnold?"

"Of course."

"Well, sir, I have reason to believe that this man is *his* son."

"Indeed? This grows interesting. Why so?"

"I know his name is Arnold, for one thing. I know he is an American, for another. Prisoners have recognized certain forms of speech of his. Then what can be the reason of his intense hatred of America and Americans? He has displayed it on several occasions, and has never been known to spare lives on board an American prize. Such a feeling would be natural in a son of Arnold, inheriting his father's vindictive pride."

"And yet," said Julian, thoughtfully, "he was polite to my cousin when he had captured her."

"Oh, yes. I do him justice, believe me. He does not war on women with weapons of blood; but he does as bad. Where would your cousin have been a month hence, had you not chanced on us? In the seraglio at Constantinople! Arnoul Bey is the principal purveyor of odalisques for every rich Turk in Stamboul, and his wealth is founded on their charms."

Julian looked at his cousin Kate, and shuddered at the thought of what might have been. Presently he said:

"It's very strange that he does not follow us, and try to exterminate us. With his strong force, he might cut us all to pieces on a long march."

"He has other fishes to fry," said Eaton, with a laugh. "I found out by my spies that he was going to embark a load of slaves for Stamboul, to-night. That's one reason I ventured so close. His man is worth a good deal to Yussuf Cara-

melli, the usurper, and I trusted to capture him. He must have suspected something, or he would never have brought back such a crowd of men. They were the bashaw's guards, and over four hundred of them."

"Yet you made short work of them."

"Yes. As I said before, these fellows can't fight like my Mamelukes, and their clumsy old guns are nowhere on horse back."

"Where are you going now, General?"

"Back to Derne, where our main body is camped. When we have taken that, we shall move in further."

They rode on for some time after this, in silence, threading groves of date-palms, and skirting the heights that descended to the Mediterranean Sea.

There was no one to disturb them. The following party kept at a very respectful distance, halted when they halted and only just kept them in sight.

Presently they came to the edge of a range of abrupt cliffs, from which a splendid view of the sea was obtained, glittering in the moonlight.

Halting at a turn, where the road approached the edge, before going away into the interior of the country, they took a long and careful survey of the harbor and sea.

There lay the town of Tripoli, now dark and silent, asleep in the moonlight. The lights were out, in the bashaw's palace, and the ports of the captured frigate no longer blazed with them. A white road was visible running from the town up the hills to the north, and one might see the dark and frowning towers of Arnoul Bey's castle at the upper termination of the road.

Eaton uttered an exclamation of satisfaction and conviction.

"I thought so."

Then he pointed to the upper end of the road, where a long black snake seemed to be about uncoiling itself and crawling slowly down the road toward Tripoli.

"We've frightened my lord into making his move to-night, Mr. Cortlandt. I suppose he thinks it too risky to leave a million of dollars or so in girls to the mercy of another raid."

"I begin to think," said Julian, thoughtfully, "that we

might better have staid in the castle and held it against him. Then he would have lost all his money."

Eaton laughed.

"If he's like his father, that would make him move heaven and earth to rout us out. As it is, he permits our undisturbed retreat, a matter of some importance to us just now. Let him take his slaves. What do we want of them?"

Julian made no answer. He was watching the slow progress of the far distant procession, when Kate Stuyvesant, who was close to him, rather frightened at being alone among so many men, touched his arm and whispered:

"How shall we ever get back, Julian?"

As he was turning away to reply to her, his eyes, roaming over the sea, were arrested by an object that seemed to rivet his attention.

"Look there, Kate," he said, in an animated tone, pointing seaward, "yonder lie the means by which we shall get back. Look."

And he pointed her out a large frigate close hauled, standing in toward the shore and followed by a fore and aft schooner.

"There is no mistaking that rig, Kate. Yonder's a Yankee, at last."

CHAPTER XIX.

GLORIOUS "OLD IRONSIDES!"

THE clouds hung dark and stormy over the Gulf of Tripoli, and the heavens were hidden from view by fleecy masses of gray vapor scudding southward over the sea. At a distance of three miles from land, vessels were nearly invisible, hidden in the scud and mist.

Out in the open Mediterranean and lying-to under three topsails and fore-staysail, a large frigate was plunging, bows under at every fresh squall, but behaving nobly.

The frigate was much larger than the ill-fated *Lutland*, being one of the class known as "forty-fours," though really

carrying over fifty guns. Her checkered sides were bright and glistening with new paint, her guns, secured in well ordered rows behind the closed ports, were as bright as lacquer could make them, and the brass carronades on her quarter-deck and forecastle shone like silver. Her lofty masts, and the immense spread of her yards, showed that she would carry a heavy press of sail, and her lines, unusually fine for the bluff frigate models of that day, announced probable speedy qualities.

The watch on deck were all in their places, leaning with folded arms against the bulwarks or coiling down loose ropes in neat Flemish coils, but hardly speaking.

An air of neatness and exquisite discipline pervaded the whole ship, remarkable even among men-of-war, for the weather was unusually severe. It could be seen that the frigate was well commanded.

Her flag and pennant being struck, it was impossible to tell her nationality from a distance, but a single glance at the cap of the officer of the deck would have told the story, for the letters U. S. N. were there inscribed in silver.

The frigate was a Yankee frigate, none other than the afterward famous "Old Ironsides," then on her first cruise.

Not far off, and on the weather bow, was a large schooner of some two hundred tons, a very unusual type for those latitudes, whose white fore and aft sails, trimmed as flat as boards and close reefed, betrayed an American origin at once.

The schooner carried twelve light carronades, and a long twelve-pounder grinned from a pivot amidships. The neatness and order of her decks, and the fact of her watch wearing the same uniform as those in the frigate, sufficiently announced her as belonging to the navy. The word "Enterprise" was worked in white letters on the cap-fronts of all her men.

In the midst of the storm, when both frigate and schooner were struggling hard against the wind, the former fired a gun.

A moment later, three black balls went flying up to the mast-head, and blowing loose, discovered three parti-colored flags—a signal.

The schooner replied with a single flag, and suddenly fell

off on the wind, pointing her sharp bows to the eastward, then shook out a reef in foresail and mainsail, lay over till the water began to pour in at the lee scuppers, and traveled away from her consort.

A person with a good glass, at the cross-trees of the frigate, might have seen, far away to the east, a little southing, the triangular sails of two feluccas, close hauled, coming out of the Gulf of Tripoli.

Away went the Enterprise on the port tack, making a tremendous rate of speed, for the saucy schooner was modeled like a yacht, and sailed like a witch.

The course she was taking gave her a great advantage over the two feluccas, which were trying to fetch the open sea by a succession of short tacks, and were not yet quite clear of the mouth of the bay.

In less than an hour it was clear that if they kept on their course they must be intercepted by the Enterprise.

And they did keep on their course, both of them, heedless alike of the schooner that was coming sailing near, and of the slower frigate toiling after. In the same moment that they at last cleared the headland and laid their course easterly, the Enterprise ranged up alongside of the sternmost felucca and fired a shot through her mainsail, running up the American flag and pennant at the same time.

Then ensued a wonderful commotion on the decks of the felucca. She was a low, sharp, saucy-looking vessel with a trimness of rig that proved her to be some sort of a vessel-of-war, but her crew seemed to be incapable of doing any thing, in their surprise and consternation, but gabble wildly to each other.

The schooner kept on her course till close alongside of the other vessel, and threw her grappling-irons with perfect success. A moment later the two vessels were bumping and grinding together in the heavy sea, while a boarding party of some twenty men, heavily armed, sprung on board the felucca, and took possession.

There was no attempt at resistance. The crew, a lot of swarthy Moors, though all armed, seemed to be too petrified with surprise to do any thing. They dropped on their

knees, praying for quarter, and were disarmed and bound in a moment.

The officer of the boarding-party waved his hand to his commander to announce his success, received some orders through the trumpet, and then cast off the grappling-irons, took full possession of his prize, and stood on after the schooner, which now shook out another reef and rushed on to chase the other felucca.

He found his new prize a fast sailer, and leaving directions with the helmsman to stand on, went below himself to inspect his prize.

What was his surprise, the instant he set foot between decks, to find that the felucca was full to overflowing of women, and that every one of them was lying down, on cushions and carpets, terribly sea-sick.

The spectacle was at once surprising and ludicrous.

At least a hundred girls of various ages, from fourteen to twenty, of all shades of color and complexion, all beautiful in face and feature, all richly dressed, but all dreadfully sea-sick, were lying along the sides of the vessel.

From certain marks, the American judged that the felucca had once been a gun-boat, for the quarters extended all the way from stem to stern, leaving little or no room for a cabin, of which indeed the bulkheads had been knocked out.

The girls were on an equality, as far as lodging was concerned.

The officer tried to converse with one or two, but was compelled to give it up as a bad job, as none of them understood him. He was turning away in despair, when he heard a mournful voice, half smothered, crying out :

"Oh, monsieur, for ze lofe of heaven, eef you are gentleman, put me ashore."

The young lieutenant turned round.

He could distinguish, in a dark nook under the stairway, a very fat old woman, dressed in a fantastic Oriental manner, who lay in a limp, flabby mass in the corner, white as a sheet.

"Who in the world are you, ma'am?" he asked, bluntly.

"*Mon Dieu, monsieur*, I am Madame de Schaffhausen, sister to your American minister at Naples, Monsieur Stuyvesant."

"Well, ma'am, what can I do for you?" asked the sailor, coolly, not at all awed at the sound of madame's title.

"Monsieur, I don't ask much," said the old lady, faintly. "All I ask is to be put ashore, that I may die in my bed."

The lieutenant could not help laughing.

"Why, ma'am," he said, "we're on a cruise now, and there's not enough left behind in the shape of land to grow a potato. You seem to be French. How came you here?"

"Oh, monsieur," said madame, plaintively, "it is a sad story, and involves a trusting woman and a villain."

And once more the young officer could hardly help laughing at the pathetic and woebegone face of this stout old lady, who talked like a young girl.

"He called himself the Prince of Delos," she said, "and he made me think he wanted to marry my niece, the villain."

CHAPTER XX.

PRIZE OR NO PRIZE?

MEANWHILE, above decks, the scene was growing exciting. The schooner, with only a single reef in mainsail and foresail, was foaming along in pursuit of the other felucca, a small, swift vessel, with a hull that seemed to be made of pure gold, so brightly did it glisten.

Swift as was the Enterprise, in light winds she would have had but little chance with the Vohdu, for it was none other than the swift corsair that was now being chased.

But in the face of a stiff, northerly gale, the stout schooner built for a first-class sea-boat, had a considerable advantage. Moreover, her peculiarly American rig gave her still more. Instead of being tall and narrow, her sails were low and broad, and she was able to carry a heavy press of canvas, without keeling over too much.

The Vohdu, on the other hand, seemed to be a very crack vessel, from the inclination to which the gale pressed her, and she cut through the billows at a considerable sacrifice of

speed, instead of rising over them, like the duck-built Baltimore clipper.

Slowly, but surely, the Enterprise gained on her chase, while the frigate, which by this time had shaken the reefs out of her topsails, and set her courses, was coming up hand over hand, promising to pass both the smaller vessels, in the heavy weather.

A difference of six hundred tons or so is a great advantage to a ship in such heavy weather, as it enables her to carry more sail, and to crush the waves, without suffering from the shock, as in the case of the smaller craft.

It was thus the case that, in about an hour from the time the Enterprise captured the slave felucca, the noble frigate passed to windward, with all sail below her topgallants set and drawing, and ranged up within a couple of cable-lengths of the Vohdu, which was laboring dreadfully.

By that time they were out of sight of the bluff cliffs at the mouth of the harbor of Tripoli, and the land alee, low and sandy, lay at some three miles off, half-visible through the driving sand.

It seemed as if the chances of escape for the Vohdu were now reduced to a nullity, both her foes having the advantage in such weather, when, moreover, the frigate could fire her guns, while the Vohdu could not return a shot, on account of the rolling of the vessel, which was half-under water all the time.

The trim plumage of the handsome little felucca was sadly rumpled now. She looked like some beautiful bird of paradise, caught in a hurricane, battered and bruised.

As they ranged up, the men on the frigate's decks could see the people of the corsair lashed to their posts, and nearly carried away every moment by the waves that came aboard.

But not a sign of confusion was visible, and there seemed to be no alarm among them at the close proximity of their enemies.

At the helm of the felucca, grasping the long, brass, curved rod that formed its tiller, stood a splendid figure, that riveted the looks of every one on board the frigate and schooner.

It was a man in a magnificent Greek dress, glittering all

over with rich jewels, as much out of place in his bravery of costume, in that scene, as his delicate-looking vessel.

He stood there, with his keen gaze wandering alternately from the sails of his own vessel to the scud ahead, then to the towering canvas of the noble frigate on his weather-quarter, that was every moment drawing nearer and nearer.

He moved not, save to trim his vessel; spoke not, exhibited no symptoms of fear, and every time his look turned on the American frigate, it wore an expression of savage vindictiveness, mingled with triumph.

"Mr. Jones, that fellow doesn't seem disposed to heave to," said the captain of the frigate, as he watched the stranger through his glass. "Heave him a shot."

The officer of the deck touched his cap and went forward to give the necessary orders. A few minutes later, the lee bow-port of the frigate was flung open, and a single gun was cast loose.

It rolled to and fro with fearful impetus, large and stiff as was the frigate, but the men managed to load it at last, and the lieutenant himself tried to point it at the chase.

Then, all on a sudden, the corsair chief changed his tactics.

Shouting some orders in Arabic to his men, he leaned hard against the tiller to windward, put up his helm, and the bows of the Vohdu fell off to the southward, while her long main-yard jibed over to port, with a shock that threatened to carry away the mast.

The next minute the Vohdu was flying away toward the land, wing and wing, scudding before the full power of the gale, and rapidly leaving frigate and schooner astern.

The former stood on her course till the gun had been fired, but the rolling of the ship was too great for accurate practice. The shot, instead of striking the Vohdu, struck the water astern, and bounded over the felucca in a cloud of spray.

The schooner was rolling too heavily to cast loose her guns, and had put up her helm at the same minute as the corsair, but to the surprise of every one, the Vohdu discovered, all at once, a speed that no one on board had given her credit for.

Her white and blue striped sails, that had previously been closely reefed, rose in the air, as she shook out the reefs, and she fairly began to fly toward the coast.

The Enterprise fell astern as if she had been at anchor, and even the frigate, under the sail that she carried, found herself fairly distanced by the saucy felucca.

"The fellow's been fooling us, captain," said the officer of the deck, suddenly pointing to an object tossing in the water, a little way off. "He's been towing a bucket or something, and he's just let it go."

The commander looked over the side, and there, sure enough was a congeries of buckets, old sails, spars, etc., that had but a few moments before left the stern of the Vohdu, where they had been towing, thereby accounting for her being so easily overhauled.

It was clear that the corsair had been playing with them, though with what object could not yet be ascertained.

"We shall drive him ashore, anyway," said the captain, in a tone of triumph, as they flew toward the African coast.

"They say he played that trick on the Portland to her cost, sir," said her subordinate, respectfully. "It's a ticklish coast about here, sir."

Up comes a middy, saluting.

"Please, sir, the Enterprise is signaling 'breakers ahead.'"

The commander started, and looked around his vessel.

The Vohdu had gained nearly a quarter of a mile on them, and under the furious gale was already within half a mile of the coast.

The schooner, which had gained on the frigate by scudding first, was half way between the ship and the felucca, and was signaling.

Even as he looked, he saw the Vohdu haul up again, and go flying away to the westward, close to the coast, toward Tripoli.

A white line of breakers, close under her lee, indicated the reason of her change of course.

"Clew up and stow the courses!" ordered the officer of the deck, at a sign from the captain. "Helm aport! Haul in the port braces. Board starboard tacks. Keep her full. Well dyce."

And the frigate heeled her wind again, and abandoned in disgust the chase of the bold corsair who had already

drawn one noble ship to her destruction. He was not destined to aid in the destruction of Old Ironsides.

In the afternoon the gale abated, and the frigate returned to her old post off Tripoli, where she was soon joined by a trim, rakish brig, a sister vessel to the Enterprise, named the Siren.

The three vessels, accompanied by their prize, the slave vessel, lay to, outside the harbor, and the commodore summoned his officers by signal to a council of war.

At sunset the wind had lulled again, nearly to a calm, and the commanders of the different vessels of the squadron were assembled in the cabin of the commodore, about to open the council, when a bustle was heard alongside, as of a boat coming aboard, and soon after the sentry at the cabin door announced:

"Mr. Cortlandt, sir, first officer of the Portland."

Amid a general murmur of surprise, Julian Cortlandt entered the cabin, still disguised as a negro slave.

CHAPTER XXI:

THE VESSEL'S MISSION.

It was already the close of twilight, and the schooner, with the Siren, and the late slave felucca, were lying almost idle on the waves, just out of sight of the town of Tripoli.

The felucca had long ago landed her cargo of female slaves at Derne, where all parties were set free, and where Madame de Schaffhausen, with much joy, had found her niece, from whom she had so long been separated. Under the protection of General Eaton, with a company of marines from the frigate, the two remained ashore in camp, very well satisfied, while madame explained to her niece all the cruel deceptions of "dat monsterre, dat horreeble rascalle, dat call himself a prince."

It seemed that on the third night after her arrival of Tripoli, in the corsair's castle madame had been sent to a separate prison among a lot of "horreeble old women," who had

compelled her to grind meal in a handmill, and perform all sorts of menial work, to her great disgust, and that when she was transferred to the slave felucca, it was as a sort of duenna over a lot of wild young creatures, who laughed her to scorn, and played all manner of tricks upon her.

From the time he had sent her off, the "Prince" had not given her a civil word, and great was madame's bitterness, consequently.

Kate, for her part, while thankful for her own escape, was much grieved whenever she thought of the probable fate of Tommy Trevor and Aimee de Rivery. The two had undoubtedly been captured, and had the lad's deception been discovered, his life was probably a sacrifice ere this.

Cortlandt, as soon as the squadron came within practicable distance, had joined them, as we see, and the slave felucca, which had formerly been a French gunboat in Egypt, was duly taken into the U. S. service, manned and armed, and named the Intrepid. That name was one soon destined to be famous, and to make famous that of her commander and all of her crew.

The night had closed in, with a soft, easterly breeze, the sea and bay smooth as in summer. The frigate and her consorts were hull down on the horizon, when the Intrepid, followed, at half a mile off, by the Siren, reached the entrance of the bay at the precise spot where the ill-fated Portland had gone aground.

The brig astern had disguised herself, by bending old and dirty sails and in other manners, till she seemed nothing but a common trader.

On board the Intrepid, some below and some on deck, eighty-two men, all told, were collected. Julian Cortlandt, standing beside the young commander of the Enterprise, was on the quarter-deck of the felucca, looking anxiously toward the town, and near them stood a dark Maltese, the pilot of the felucca, who was to serve as interpreter.

"There she is, Steve," whispered Cortlandt, as they entered the harbor, pointing toward the town. "Poor old barky, there's no cutting her out. She must go."

Looming up in the darkness, in the faint light of the

moon, which was in her last quarter, they could perceive the dim outlines of the captured Portland, lying at anchor in front of the bashaw's palace, head to wind.

"Her foremast, which had been cut away while she was on the reef, had not yet been replaced, her main and mizzen topmasts were housed, and her lower yards were on the gun-wales. Her lower standing rigging, however, was in its place * * * Just within her, lay two corsairs, with a few gun-boats and a galley or two."*

CHAPTER XXII.

TOMMY'S BRAVERY.

IN the large cabin of the Portland, as trim and splendidly fitted as in the days when she swept the seas under the American flag, sat two girls in Oriental costume, with their arms around each other's necks, while one of them was weeping bitterly.

The other appeared to be comforting her companion, and spoke in English.

"Now, don't cry, Aimee. We're in a tight fix, as Julian used to say, but we might be worse off. That corsair rascal hasn't found out who I am yet, and till he does he won't separate us. You know, Aimee, I'd die to defend you."

It is needless to tell our readers that this seeming girl was none other than our little friend Tommy Trevor, whose native wit, added to his dress, had braved, so far, the penetrating glance of the corsair chief, without discovering his secret.

"Ah, my poor boy," said Aimee, sadly, and kissing his brow, much as an elder sister might a young brother, "what could your feeble strength do against that bold, bad man?"

Tommy turned pettishly away. Boy-like, he had fallen

*The description in quotation marks is taken from Cooper's *Narrative History*, the author feeling that no words of his own could improve the picture so artistically painted by the king of American writers. The reader will recognize, in the Portland of our story, the ill-fated frigate *Philadelphia*.

desperately in love with the young Creole, who was several years his senior, entirely forgetful of his still more mature charmer at Naples. To his ardent nature, it was peculiarly humiliating to be treated as a child by the queen of his affections—for the time.

"I can drive my dirk into him, any way," he grumbled, angrily. "You needn't think because I'm little I can't fight. You'll see, some time."

"But what good will your fighting do?" asked the girl, wearily. "In a few days, at the utmost, we shall be taken to Constantinople and sold. Then, indeed, we must be separated."

"And I say we won't," said Tommy, sturdily. "Once let me get out of this nasty harbor and to sea again and I have a plan. We can jump overboard at all events, if the frigate chases us, and get picked up."

Aimee was about to answer, when the cabin door opened, and the corsair prince walked in.

For a moment he stood surveying the pair whom he imagined to be both girls. In the multitude of his prisoners, he confounded the face of Tommy Trevor with those of others.

The corsair chief was evidently in the worst of humors. The loss of the felucca with its valuable booty, the price of several successful cruises, had galled him deeply. The only reason that Aimee had not shared their fate was, that Arnoul Bey, deeming his European prisoners the most valuable of all, had retained them on the *Vohdu*, and Tommy had been put there as an English girl, on account of his language. Really, with his handsome face, the boy made an exceedingly pretty girl.

"So," said the corsair, piercing both with a glance of his black eyes, "I find that your accursed American friends have stolen my slaves."

"Turn about's fair play," quoth Tommy, pertly.

"Keep that saucy tongue of yours still, Fatima," said Arnoul Bey, grimly. "I have sold mute girls, ere now, for a good price, and a tongue is easily cut out."

Tommy thought best to hold his peace.

"Well, monsieur," said Aimee, timidly, "and to what do we owe this visit?"

“I was thinking,” replied the corsair, slowly, “whether I have not sold enough women to retire from business. You are young and beautiful, and would make a good queen for my harem. What say you to going back to the castle and becoming my queen, Aimee?”

Aimee rose, trembling but dignified.

“Sir,” she said, “you sold me once to the bashaw, and I would not yield to him, so that he was compelled to sell me back. Think you that I, who refused your master, would consent to be the first in a pirate’s harem? Away.”

The Prince of Delos set his teeth together.

“Very well,” he said, sternly, “you have chosen. Perhaps you will be kinder to the master of the master. Come with me. We are going on board the Vohdu.”

“Not without me,” said Tommy, clasping Aimee round the waist.

Aimee, in her turn, put one arm round Fatima’s neck. One might have taken them for sisters.

Arnoul Bey smiled sardonically.

“Very well,” he said. “Two will sell as well as one. Come with me.”

Without a word of expostulation, which both knew to be useless, they followed the corsair chief to the deck.

Arrived there, all was peaceful and quiet. The lower yards of the frigate lay on the top of the bulwarks, but the rigging was all stowed neatly away, and not a superfluous rope littered the decks. The Moorish sailors, in their picturesque dresses, were scattered in groups about the vessel, generally seated and smoking, or telling each other stories. The whole aspect of the vessel was one of quiet and repose.

Aimee never forgot it in after days, it was so unlike the spectacle on a European man-of-war, so lazy and picturesque.

Several of the Moors were sitting on the rail or leaning over the bulwarks, and as the little party came on deck, one of the loungers hailed some vessel in Arabic, shouting:

“Oh master of the felucca, whence from in the name of Allah?”

The corsair chief started and frowned.

“Who comes?” he demanded, sternly.

"Oh, captain," said a splendidly appareled Moor, "it is a strange felucca, that seems likely to run us aboard."

Just then they heard an answering hail, in Arabic, which Aimee understood.

"Oh, true believers, help us, in Allah's name. We sailed from Malta and were caught in the gale and nearly swamped. We have lost both our anchors, and can not come to, unless you will allow us to make fast to your cables."

"It is the duty of all true believers to help the unfortunate," answered one of the Moors, with Oriental gravity. "Come forward in the name of Allah."

The corsair chief uttered an impatient exclamation between his teeth.

Such a request in a European port, to a man-of-war, would have been greeted with a volley of oaths at the trader's impudence. Among the barbarous Mohammedans it was taken in good part. Arnoul Bey was not yet in regular command of the captured frigate, though he had been promised it by the bashaw, or he would have ordered off the stranger.

As it was, he impatiently exclaimed :

"My boat there! Where are the men of the Vohdu?"

Several Moors started forward at the word and the side was manned for his exit, the Vohdu lying within a few cable lengths of the ship.

As they went over the side, a small felucca, with a single lateen sail, was seen slowly drifting down toward the bows of the frigate, and the Moors on board were conversing with the Maltese who had hailed them.

"What are you laden with?" asked one.

"With English cutlery, so please your lordship," was the unequivocal answer from the felucca.

Then Arnoul Bey's boat, bearing the two seeming girls, left the side of the frigate, and slowly moved toward the Vohdu.

"Send out your boat, with a rope," called out one of the Moorish officers. "Allah forbid you should drift ashore for want of charity. We will send you another."

On came the felucca, slowly drifting before the cat's-paws that ruffled the water, and was within a few fathoms of the frigate's bows, when her triangular sail began to flap to and fro, and presently was taken aback. The wind had shifted.

A moment later the great ship swung her stern round to seaward, under the same current of air, the felucca gathered sternway, and drifted right under the broadside of the frigate, slowly forging astern at a distance of about forty yards.

"Help us, oh, true believers," called out the Maltese, "or we shall drift ashore."

Then there was a bustle on the frigate, as one of the boats that had been lying under her counter pushed off, carrying a hawser, that was paid out of the cabin-window to the helpless felucca. At the same moment a boat left the felucca itself, carrying a line which was soon made fast to the fore-chains of the ship. Then the men on the felucca began to haul on the fasts, and slowly the little craft neared the frigate.

Arnoul Bey had not deigned to cast a glance at these proceedings, and as the felucca began to near the frigate, he reached his own vessel.

"*Amerikanos!* Look out for boarders!"

His quick eye had detected all at a glance.

The Moors on the frigate sprung up, with cries of rage and terror; the decks of the felucca in a single moment became black with men; and, rising in grim silence, the Americans, with a single strong pull, brought their vessel alongside.

Tommy Trevor stood for one instant as if paralyzed, and then uttered a loud cry of joy.

"Into the sea, Aimee," he cried, eagerly. "We are safe if we can reach them."

Catching hold of the girl by the arm, he was pulling her to the side, when the corsair chief, seizing the girl, dealt the boy a stunning blow in the breast.

With a cry of rage, Tommy whipped out a little dirk that he had hidden in his dress, and sprung at the corsair. Three quick, fierce stabs were given the corsair, almost before he was aware of the assault. One cut his right arm, another his shoulder, the third his side. And then, with a wild hurrah, Tommy leaped into the sea and struck out gallantly for the *Intrepid*, for it was none other.

But on the frigate affairs were changed. Scores of dark figures were pouring in at every port-hole, from the decks of the felucca. The clashing of steel, oaths and stifled groans, announced that the contest was already hot, on board.

Then *splash, splash, splash*, in the water on the other side of the frigate, told that the surprised Moors were seeking safety in flight. By the time gallant little Tommy Trevor had been picked up on the felucca, the decks of the frigate were cleared of Moors, and in full possession of the Americans!

The first man that Tommy recognized, when he boarded the Intrepid, was Julian Cortlandt.

"Oh, Julian, here I am at last, safe and sound."

In a moment the lieutenant was on board the felucca once more, and hugging Tommy in his arms, explained to the boy's questioning glances:

"Setting fire to the poor old barky. We can't cut her out, so that is the most we can do. And we're doing it well. See!"

A bright light shot up from one of the hatchways, and a moment later, Mr. D—— came running to the side of the frigate, and standing in the chains, shouted:

"All aboard, Intrepids. That job's well done."

Then the men came pouring out of the ports, and into the little felucca, as fast as they had boarded. A column of flame shot up from the main hatch as well as the fore, and the felucca fell away out of danger.

Then the sweeps are out, eight of a side, each manned by five sturdy pair of hands, and away goes the little Intrepid. Her work was done and well done.

"Now's your time, boys," shouts D——, excitedly. "Give 'em three cheers and run up the flag."

With one accord the sailors ceased rowing and gave three hearty cheers for victory. It was the first shout that night.

The cheer seemed to rouse the Moors from their stupor. It had hardly ceased when the Vohdu and the other corsair, with all the batteries of the town opened their fire in the darkness, sending the spray flying all over the Intrepid, as she pulled rapidly down the harbor, assisted by a rising breeze from the south.

The shift of wind had indeed been providential for them, and was rapidly removing them from danger.

"Oh, Julian," whispered Tommy, presently, "look back. Did you ever see such a sight?"

There lay the Portland, a mass of flame, illuminating the whole harbor with the conflagration. The ships and gun-boats stood out like ghosts amid the red glare, the roar of guns was incessant, and the whole town of Tripoli was awake and in a clamor. The appearance of the ship was singular and magnificent. The flames, having run up the masts and rigging, collected under the broad tops where they bellied out, giving the whole the appearance of glowing columns and fiery capitals. In those latitudes everything was so dry as to burn like tinder. Now, as the heat increased, came out the fact that the guns of the devoted ship were loaded, for as she swung to her chain cable, with her broadside directed to the town and forts, the guns began to go off, first singly, then in salvos, and the shot were seen to go crashing into the town.

The crew of the Intrepid stopped rowing and gave three last cheers, as the staunch old frigate went to her rest destroying her foes in death

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE GAME OF LIFE.

Months have passed away since the February night, when the little Intrepid penetrated single-handed into the harbor of Tripoli to perform her daring exploit, and a strong squadron is assembled in front of the doomed town. Old Ironsides in the van accompanied by two powerful brigs, the Siren and Argus. The Scourge, Nautilus, Vixen and Enterprise, too, were all there, with two captured feluccas used as mortar vessels, and six small gun-boats.

On the third of August, 1804, the Americans opened a general fire on Tripoli, sent in the gun-boats in shallow water to engage the Moors, and remained in action four hours and a half. Results, three Moorish gun-boats captured, three more sunk, the Moslems badly whipped, the Americans, with a tremendous moral advantage, having lost only fourteen men, killed and wounded.

On the 28th of August a second attack was made in which

the town of Tripoli suffered still more severely; and on the 3d of September a third attack of even more weight followed, during which the single frigate engaged fort after fort along the line, silencing every one, and demoralizing the Tripolitans completely.

On the night of the 4th the little Intrepid, which had done such gallant service, was sent in as a fire-ship, and exploded by accident, blowing all her crew into eternity. To the present day it is not precisely known what was the cause of the premature explosion.

This unfortunate accident terminated the war before Tripoli. The rest of the war was fought on shore by the Mamelukes and banished Moors under General Eaton, assisted by a force from two of the smaller vessels of the American squadron.

On the 27th of April, 1805, Eaton, with twelve hundred men, assaulted and stormed the town of Derne, defended by some three or four thousand, and in two hours carried it by assault.

Two months after, the bashaw, humbled by successive disasters, sued for peace, and gave up all the prisoners taken in the Portland, who were found to have been well treated, and the Tripolitan war was over.

Julian Cortlandt sustained an active part in all the engagements, commanding a gun-boat in the first attack on Tripoli, subsequently being promoted to the command of a brig-of-war. At the assault on Derne he had volunteered to go on shore, and while leading one of the assaulting columns, found himself face to face, for the first time in many months, with his old enemy Arnoul Bey, or the Prince of Delos.

The two encountered with the ferocity of undying hate. Both men were expert swordsmen, and in five minutes' hard work neither had been able to wound the other seriously. The contest was terminated in an unexpected manner by a shot from one of the Mamelukes, who stretched out the corsair, with a ball through the body.

Julian, merciful in victory, prevented the fierce Moslems from killing the dying man with their cimeters. Arnoul Bey was mortally wounded, and the American had some questions to ask him.

Stretched on a divan, in the humble room of a Moorish hovel, lay the once all-powerful Prince of Delos, Arnoul Bey. The dew of death was on his brow, and beside him, tending him like a brother, was Julian Cortlandt.

The corsair was speaking, slowly and with difficulty. "Why did you keep them from dispatching me? I did not ask you for quarter."

"Because I hope I am a Christian," said Julian, gravely. "You fought me fairly and I don't want to kill soul as well as body."

"Soul," repeated the dying corsair, with a bitter sneer, "where is this soul you Christians prate about? Can you tell, can I? Has any one seen it? Bah! it is but a step, and then, eternal nothingness."

"Sir, you mistake," said Julian, gently. "You seem to be much embittered against humanity, but remember that, even the thief on the cross found mercy when he sought it. These are strange words, perhaps, from a man of war, but I thank God I have not forgotten to be a Christian."

The corsair gazed wistfully at the other and turned away.

"You are an honest foe, and mean well, I believe, but it is too late. Besides, you are a Yankee, and I hate them all."

"And why?" asked Julian. "You were born in America yourself. Why do you hate it so? Have I harmed you?"

"Harmed me?" repeated the corsair, bitterly. "Is it harm to curse a man's name through two generations, to drive the father to revenge by constant injustice and to curse the son for his fault? Oh, I know your cursed nation well, with their sanctimonious hypocrisy, but I have fed fat my old grudge like Shylock. Do you know who I am?"

"I partly suspect," said Julian, still more gently, "and indeed I pity you."

"Pity me! Hark ye, sir, my father was once the best General your people had, in your Revolution. When the fate of America hung trembling in the balance, it was his arm that hurled defeat on Burgoyne and gave you the empire of the world at Saratoga. And how was he paid? With grudging praise, with plentiful blame for all his short-

comings. Neglected, despised, with incapable juniors put over his head, he still gave his talents for America, till she disgraced him by a reprimand after a mock court-martial. Then, indeed, he turned on her and revenged himself like a man whom you made what he was. His revenge failed through an unforeseen accident and he fled to England. Hunted down, execrated by all men, none had a curse deep enough for Benedict Arnold. But I, sir, I who am his son I who am not ashamed of it, I have avenged my father's wrongs on your hated race, and now I lie here with the knowledge that my single hand has struck the only blows in this war that you have felt, and not your sword but the Mameluke's bullet has conquered Arnold."

He fell back, exhausted, and Julian contemplated half with curiosity half with aversion the spectacle of inextinguishable hate.

"Mr. Arnold," he said, presently, "we knew all that, months ago, and yet I swear to you that, had you been my prisoner unwounded, I would have treated you as an honorable enemy."

Arnold's face softened.

"I think you would, Cortlandt," he said, more kindly. "You are one of the old Dutch race, like Schuyler, that do not revenge injuries, but repay them with good. I wish I could do something to show you, I am not ungrateful to friends, if I hate an enemy."

"You can," said Julian, eagerly. "Tell me where is Aimee de Rivery."

Arnold smiled faintly.

"In the seraglio at Stamboul. I sold her to the Sultan."

Julian hung his head. "Alas, it is too late. Poor little Tom Trevor. He will be inconsolable."

"Bah!" said the corsair, grimly, "she is not so badly off. With her talents and face she may become a Sultana! Is not that better than sinking into a French madame, tending children in the country? She was ambitious, with all her quiet ways. I never harmed her or your proud cousin. They were worth money to me, and with that money what a life I led in Europe! The proudest princes of all were

willing to kiss the feet of the Prince of Delos, without asking whence came his money. Take my advice, Cortlandt, and turn pirate. 'Tis a short life, but a merry one."

Julian gave a slight shudder at the hardened corsair. The Prince of Delos turned away in disgust at the other's grave looks and called for wine.

Twelve hours after, he died, as he had lived, hardened to the last.

It needs but little more to finish our tale. Kate Stuyvesant, when she had rejoined her father at Naples, was glad to remain there till the war was over and the minister was able to take his passage home on "Old Ironsides."

Julian and she were married, soon after the close of the war, in New York, and conspicuous at the wedding as best man, was a very short young gentleman, whose whiskers had not yet begun to sprout, but who was courted by every one, and addressed, even in republican America, as "my lord."

And who, think you, was this short young gentleman? An English lord, every inch of him, none other than our little friend, Tom Trevor, once a humble midddy, now by the sudden demise of his elder brother, become the twenty-fourth baron Dacre of Dacre, the oldest peer in England, with a rent roll of forty thousand a year.

Tommy—Lord Dacre we mean—found his fate in Alida Cortlandt, Julian's sister, one of Kate's bridesmaids, whom he made Lady Dacre before his majority.

Years and years after, when Lord Dacre, risen high in the service of his country, was present at a reception in Constantinople, he was surprised to receive a note delivered by one of the seraglio slaves. Opening it he found it came from none other than his quondam flame, Aimee de Rivery, and announced to him that the sultan had been pleased as a mark of special favor to her and him to allow him to see her.

The next day accordingly, came a gorgeous palanquin for Lord and Lady Dacre, who were received at the entrance of the seraglio by the Kishlar Aga, and conducted into the presence of the sultan himself at a private audience.

Then, with no one present but the sultan to mark the breach of Oriental etiquette, our old friend, Aimee de Rivery,

entered gorgeously dressed and leading by her hand a **fine** boy of about eight years old, whose face proclaimed his maternity in her.

On being introduced to Lady Dacre, the once timid Aimee proved to have lost none of her European habits, for the two ladies plunged into a perfect sea of memories. Then it came out that Aimee, the little Creole of Martinique, like her old playmate, Josephine de la Pagerie, had left the Antilles to mount the steps of a throne.

Not a humble Odalisque, but the acknowledged wife of the Grand Seignior, she had become Sultana Validah, and mother of the future reformer of Turkey, Sultan Mahmoud. Here her soft influence had done wonders already, and her lot need cause no scorn among civilized girls, for Aimee was a queen, nay, an empress.

Reader, my story is told. If you like it, lay it not to me, for its principal incidents are merely the unvarnished truth. If you do not like it, blame me for not telling it properly.

THE END.

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